

Children's Emergency Department (CHED)

Foreign body Discharge Information Leaflet

Children sometimes swallow things such as coins, beads, magnets or batteries. These are known as foreign bodies. Most swallowed objects pass through the child's digestive system and out with the faeces (poo) without causing harm. However, some objects such as button batteries or magnets can be very dangerous when swallowed and require further investigation and management.

Signs and symptoms of swallowed objects

Most children have no symptoms after swallowing an object. Sometimes the object can become stuck in the oesophagus (tube from the mouth to the stomach). This may cause:

- Trouble swallowing or refusing food and drink.
- Drooling.
- Pain in the chest, neck or throat.
- Noisy breathing or coughing.

Sometimes the object can become stuck in the stomach or intestines. This may cause:

- Vomiting.
- Abdominal (tummy) pain.
- Blood in their vomit or poo.
- A fever (temperature)

Treatment in hospital

Your child may have had an x-ray to look for the swallowed object. Some objects such as plastic, paper and wood do not show up on an x-ray. In many cases an x-ray is not needed.

Depending on what the object is, and where it is in the child's digestive system, the object may need to be removed.

Some objects can harm the body and may need to be removed urgently. These include button batteries and magnets.

Sometimes objects in the oesophagus (tube from the mouth to the stomach) also need to be removed. Most objects however, will pass safely on their own.

Care at home

Your child has been assessed as safe to go home after swallowing a foreign body, even though the object has not yet passed through them. Most children will pass the object without any further help. There is no need to examine your child's poo to find the object. Unless you have been told that your child needs a repeat x-ray, we do not need to follow up on your child.

IMPORTANT: When to Return to the Emergency Department

Very rarely objects can get stuck in the child's digestive system. Please return to the nearest hospital Emergency Department **IMMEDIATELY** if your child has any of the following:

- Trouble swallowing or refusing food and drink.
- Drooling.
- Pain in the chest, neck or throat.
- Vomiting.
- Abdominal (tummy) pain.
- Blood in their vomit or poo.
- An unexplained fever in the next 7 days.

Safety in the home

Button batteries (round, flat batteries often used in watches, car fobs, remote controls and toys) and high strength magnets can cause catastrophic injuries or death within hours if swallowed by a child. Ensure button batteries and high strength magnets are safely stored in your house, out of reach of your child.

We aim to provide the best care for every patient. So, we would like your feedback on the quality of the care you have received from the Hospital. Please visit <http://ratenhs.uk/IQu9vx> Or scan QR code:

