



LITHIUM DISC BATTERIES

Over the past 5 years, the power of Lithium Disc Batteries has risen >%100 and they are replacing competitors. Studies confirm electrical or chemical “burns” are more common and can - but only infrequently do - occur. These burns involve contact with moist mucosal surfaces – esophagus or nasal cavity. But there is no known danger if it is in the stomach per se. Frequency figures not readily available; single case reports have seemed to increase. Tort Actions (Malpractice Suits) are steadily climbing for Emergency Physicians.

Therefore, for lithium disc batteries:

- I. Ingestion or suspected ingestion
 - A) Refer to Emergency Department (ED) without delay.
 - B) Chest film to assure it has reached the stomach – if not, then follow up with GI or ENT consult.
 - C) If in esophagus, extract or push into stomach.
 - D) Then watchful waiting after it leaves esophagus.
- II. In the Nose
 - A) Refer to the ED for removal without excessive delay.
 - B) Urge quick action once the patient gets to ED.
 - C) 911 not needed if car is available.
- III. In the ear : Remove as soon as possible
- IV. In the rectum: Encourage a bowel movement

William O. Robertson, M. D., Medical Director

27 Feb '07
Date

Approved: 1-07
Revised: 3-07