Welcome to the First Edition of the Merseyside CDOP Newsletter!

Merseyside CDOP is a panel made up of a cross border group of professionals who meet on a monthly basis to review all child deaths that occur within Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral. Recommendations are made where modifiable factors have been identified. This is with an aim of reducing similar deaths in the future.

Through this newsletter we hope to raise awareness amongst frontline professionals, parents/carers and families of some of the risks to children that we have identified through our CDOP work. We therefore ask that you cascade this information as widely as possible to colleagues, friends and contacts.

**Button Cell Batteries**

RoSPA (The Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents) has been made aware of the dangers of children swallowing button cell batteries that can be found in toys, remote controls, calculators and small electronic devices.

**What precautions can I take to protect my child?**

- Make sure that toys and other products using button cell batteries, such as small electronic devices, have lockable battery compartments. This should mean that they are safe for children to use as the batteries are locked away.
- Be extra vigilant with items including musical greeting cards, frameless candles and remote controls as they do not have lockable compartments. RoSPA advises that children should not be allowed to have access to these products if the battery compartment is not secure.
- It is a good idea to ensure that spare batteries are locked away, and used batteries are disposed of correctly.

**What should I do if my child swallows a button cell battery?**

If your child swallows a button cell battery, seek medical advice immediately. Remember that the saliva in their body will react with the battery and so time is very much of the essence in these cases.

**Developments**

BBC News reported that engineers in the US have produced child-safe batteries with a special coating that stops them causing harm if they are swallowed. The new coating only conducts electricity when squeezed - such as when a battery is inside its spring-loaded compartment. The rest of the time it insulates the battery, making it inactive and safe.

Dr Kate Parkins, Lead Consultant for the North West and North Wales Paediatric Transport Service, specialising in intensive care, has seen several small children suffer terribly after swallowing batteries, including two recent deaths. She said it was “pretty horrific” to see internal bleeding that doctors can’t stop, no matter what they try.

The coated batteries are not in circulation yet.....therefore all adults should ensure the risk to children from button cell batteries is eradicated by always storing them in a safe place.

**What are the dangers?**

Lithium batteries react with saliva so that they leak acid within as little as an hour. If a child swallows a battery it can cause severe trauma, such as burning a hole in their throat or stomach or further damage to other internal organs, or even death.
SWITCH OFF THE POWER

Merseyside CDOP acknowledge that they are not aware of any child deaths as a consequence of this risk but significant injuries can ensue.

Electrical chargers from mobiles, laptops, game consoles and tablets can cause burns when plugged in and put into the mouth (Small babies are very fond of putting items in their mouth and their skin is especially delicate both inside and outside their mouth!) Many of us are guilty of leaving mobile phone, lap top, iPod chargers in the socket and leaving them switched on.

Please remember and think to switch off the power and put the cables away.

Keep power chargers switched off, unplugged and out of reach of children.

Electrical burns are injuries caused by an electric current. The electric current can pass through your child's body and damage tissues or organs. An electric current may also jump from an electrical source to his body and burn his body.

What can happen?

Your child's signs and symptoms will depend on where and how badly they were burned. Symptoms include:

- Burns or other injuries on their skin
- Fast or abnormal heartbeat
- Weakness, stiffness, or muscle pain
- Red or reddish black urine
- Problems moving or keeping balance
- Headache, dizziness, or problems with their memory
- Trouble thinking or staying awake
- Seizures
- Trouble breathing
- Swelling, bleeding, or damage in their mouth

Remember, prevention is better than cure – switch off and put away.


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BRIEFING SESSIONS are being held on the specified dates in the following areas to provide information regarding the work of Merseyside CDOP.

- **LIVERPOOL** on 11.12.2014: 1pm – 3pm, Job Bank, Tunnel Road, L7
  Contact: Helen Fleming Scott; [helen.flemingscott@liverpool.gov.uk](mailto:helen.flemingscott@liverpool.gov.uk)

- **WIRRAL** on 20.1.2015: 1pm – 3pm Laird Room, Birkenhead Town Hall
  Contact: Steve Withington; [stevewithington@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:stevewithington@wirral.gov.uk)

- **ST HELENS** on 16.2.2015: 10am – 12pm, St Helens Town Hall
  Contact: Sarah Herron/Susan Draper; [sarahherron@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:sarahherron@sthelens.gov.uk)/ [susandraper@sthelens.gov.uk](mailto:susandraper@sthelens.gov.uk)

- **KNOWSLEY** on 5.3.2015: 2.30pm – 4.30pm – Gallery Suite, Huyton Civic Suite
  Contact: Glenys Hurst-Robson; [childrenssafeguardingtraining@knowsley.gov.uk](mailto:childrenssafeguardingtraining@knowsley.gov.uk)

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If you have any comments about the Newsletter or would like to submit information to be included in future editions please contact:

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***NEXT EDITION – SAFE SLEEPING***