

Button batteries campaign: how to stay safe

Button batteries can badly injure or even kill a child, if swallowed.



<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/office-for-product-safety-and-standards>

We rely on button batteries to power everyday objects like car key fobs, remotes and children's toys but they can badly injure or even kill a child if they are swallowed.

This is because the button battery reacts with saliva to create caustic soda – the chemical used to unblock drains. This can burn a hole in the throat and cause internal bleeding or even death.

Larger lithium 'coin cell' batteries are the most dangerous. It sounds scary, but there are simple ways to keep your child out of danger.

Store spare batteries securely

Store spare button batteries securely and out of children's reach. Don't leave them loose in drawers or on surfaces. Watch out when opening multi packs of button batteries in case they fall on the floor.

Know which toys and gadgets use button batteries

This includes everyday toys and gadgets, such as: robot bug or fish toys, fidget spinners with LED lights, slim remote controls, car key fobs, calculators, scales, gaming headsets, watches, hearing aids, nightlights and novelty items like singing Santas.

Check your home

Have a look around your home, if you find things powered by button batteries where the battery compartment isn't secured by a screw, move them out of reach of small children. If it's faulty, get it fixed or get rid of it safely. You can also report faulty toys to your local Trading Standards.

Teach older children the dangers

Teach older children why button batteries are dangerous and why they shouldn't give them to young children.

Children often find discarded button batteries lying around or under sofa cushions. 'Dead' button batteries can still have enough power to badly hurt a small child. When you remove one, store it securely and recycle it properly promptly.

If your child swallows a button battery

Symptoms may not be obvious. Your child might be coughing, gagging or drooling, or pointing to their throat or tummy. Unclear symptoms mean it's important to be vigilant.

If you think your child has swallowed a battery, take them straight to the nearest A&E department or call 999 for an ambulance.

Do:

- take the battery packaging, toy or gadget – if you can – to help staff identify the battery
- trust your instincts and act fast, even if there are no symptoms

Don't:

- let your child eat or drink
- make your child be sick

You can download our:

[Button batteries campaign leaflet](#) (PDF, 672KB, 2 pages)

[Button batteries campaign poster](#) (PDF, 1.3MB, 1 page)

[Information and events for UK](#)

[nationals living in Portugal](#)

Published 22 November 2018

Last updated 26 May 2021 [+ show all updates](#)

1. 26 May 2021

New event added: Ask the Embassy live Q&A on Thursday 27 May

2. 11 December 2020

Information added about our new Live Q&A event on residency in Portugal on our Brits in Portugal Facebook page, on Thursday 17 December 2020.

3. 27 August 2020

Ask the Embassy Live Q&A on 10 September at 12pm

4. 23 July 2020

New Facebook Q&A session on Friday 23rd July on Brits in Portugal

5. 2 July 2020

Upcoming Live Q&A on 15 July

6. 17 March 2020

Update to outreach events page

7. 12 March 2020

Updated with new Q&A Live session

8. 20 January 2020

The meeting in Angra do Heroísmo has been cancelled.

9. 14 January 2020

Upcoming outreach events in the Azores

10. 12 November 2019

New event for UK nationals in Portugal – Porto 22 November

11. 27 September 2019

New outreach event on healthcare on Brits in Portugal Facebook

12. 16 September 2019

Update to outreach event dates to include registration details

13. 4 September 2019

New information on next outreach event in Fundão.

14. 22 August 2019

We have updated the upcoming events section.

15. 5 July 2019

Updated with links to Facebook Live sessions on residency, healthcare and driving in Portugal

16. 27 June 2019

EU Exit Update: Facebook Q&A session on Residency to take place in July on Brits in Portugal Facebook page

17. 17 May 2019

New updates to the next outreach events.

18. 7 May 2019

We've updated with new outreach events in Portugal.

19. 17 April 2019

We've added information about next outreach events.

20. 8 March 2019

We have changed the venue for our outreach event in Funchal on 21 March.

21. 4 March 2019

We have added information about the outreach event in Portalegre.

22. 25 February 2019

We have added further information about next outreach events and updated the previous ones.

23. 13 February 2019

Updates on new outreach events added to page

24. 1 February 2019

EU Exit update: confirmation of new venues and dates for next outreach events

25. 25 January 2019

EU Exit update: added information about the next event and a note for social media

26. 15 January 2019

New dates added for outreach events

27. 4 January 2019

Update of dates and places for past and future outreach events

28. 3 December 2018

We've added addresses and links for next outreach events.

29. 28 November 2018

Added further details about the outreach event in Sintra

30. 22 November 2018

First published.

[FCO is first government department to join the #OneLess campaign](#)

- Foreign Office joins network of NGOs, businesses and thinktanks to tackle ocean plastic
- New data shows Foreign Office has achieved a 98% reduction in single-use plastics since launching internal #BeyondPlastic campaign
- Plastic bottles completely removed from the Foreign Office in London and embassies around the world are taking up the challenge to go plastic-free

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has today joined the #OneLess pioneer network which cultivates a fundamental change in the way Londoners drink water by promoting a refill culture and reducing our reliance on single-use plastic water bottles.

The FCO also published new data showing its use of single-use plastics has fallen by 98 per cent since the introduction last year of a drive to eliminate avoidable single-use plastics in its UK operations.

Sir Simon McDonald Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, said:

Thanks to changes we've made since April 2018, the Foreign and

Commonwealth Office now uses nearly 2.5 million fewer single-use plastic items every year.

I want us to lead the way on sustainability in Whitehall and beyond. Joining the #OneLess campaign will allow us to share our expertise and consign the single-use plastic water bottle to history.

The #OneLess campaign, hosted by ZSL (Zoological Society of London), works with pioneer network members to trial new solutions, redesign infrastructure and overcome challenges.

Rachel Shairp, Project Coordinator of the #OneLess campaign, said:

Single-use plastic water bottles are unnecessary in a city like London and over the past three years we've seen Londoners, businesses and members of government embrace tap water and rally to transform London into a place where plastic bottled water is a thing of the past.

We're delighted to be working with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to help them move from single-use plastic water bottles to more ocean-friendly ways of drinking water.

Dominic Jermy, Director General of international conservation charity ZSL said:

The evidence of the damage plastic is doing to our environment is overwhelming. Since 2016 ZSL through the #OneLess campaign has removed nearly 70,000 single-use plastic bottles from the Thames alone. I am delighted to see the Foreign and Commonwealth Office taking steps to help reduce single-use plastic and I hope other government departments will follow their lead.

The FC0's #BeyondPlastic campaign has focused on eliminating all avoidable single-use plastics by offering staff different alternatives, and initiatives such as giving a discount on drinks purchased with a reusable mug – the so-called 'Latte Levy', the first in Whitehall. As part of this, the Foreign Office has, since August 2018, removed all plastic-bottled water from its restaurants and coffee shops, which accounted for over 54,000 units in the preceding 20 months.

In addition, 14 embassies of our around the world have managed to completely eliminate single-use plastic, and a further 40 have set out plans to do so.

Notes to editors:

FC0 performance on avoidable single-use plastics is as follows:

2014:

Description	Pack size	Total quantity	Total spend (£)
Plastic sauce sachets	200	No data available	No data available
Plastic take away containers	Various (500>5000)	No data available	No data available
Plastic cutlery	1000	No data available	No data available
Plastic water bottles	Each	No data available	No data available

2015:

Description	Pack size	Total quantity	Total spend (£)
Plastic sauce sachets	200	No data available	No data available
Plastic take away containers	Various (500>5000)	16	584.61
Plastic cutlery	1000	20	237.94
Plastic water bottles	Each	3339	1,168.04

2016:

Description	Pack size	Total quantity	Total spend (£)
Plastic sauce sachets	200	235	1,192.54
Plastic take away containers	Various (500>5000)	114	4,193.02
Plastic cutlery	1000	255	3,082.05
Plastic water bottles	Each	30331	10,624.42

2017:

Description	Pack size	Total quantity	Total spend (£)
Plastic sauce sachets	200	357	2,047.03
Plastic take away containers	Various (500>5000)	88	3,136.18
Plastic cutlery	1000	288	3,481.49
Plastic water bottles	Each	33080	11,736.60

2018:

Description	Pack size	Total quantity	Total spend (£)
Plastic sauce sachets	200	2	9.72
Plastic take away containers	Various (500>5000)	8	287.30
Plastic cutlery	1000	14	163.85
Plastic water bottles	Each	21451	8,183.33

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London) to support this media release may only be used for editorial reporting purposes for the contemporaneous illustration of events, things or the persons in the image or facts mentioned in the media release or image caption. Reuse of the picture or video requires further permission from the ZSL press office.

Sustainable Integration of Young People into the Labour Market (0C25S19P1462)

Call to run a project to support young people to improve the transition from education to work and within the labour market in the North East Region LEP area.

Afghanistan: Call for proposals for FC0's programme fund 2019/20

British Embassy in Kabul is inviting proposals for Foreign & Commonwealth Office's (FCO) programme fund for project activities that support policy priorities in Afghanistan.