Honey May Reduce Injury in Children Who Have Swallowed Button Batteries

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Ingestion of button batteries, which are frequently found in the household setting, can rapidly lead to caustic esophageal injury in infants and children. A new study published in The Laryngoscope found that drinking honey or Carafate® (a cherry-flavored duodenal ulcer prescription) may help reduce esophageal damage.

In experiments conducted on cadavers and live animals, both honey and Carafate® provided a physical barrier and neutralized the tissue pH increase associated with battery ingestion; they both reduced injury severity compared with other common household liquids, including apple juice, orange juice, sodas, sports drinks, and maple syrup.

“An esophageal button battery can quickly cause significant injury. We have identified protective interventions for both the household and hospital setting that can reduce injury severity,” said co-principal investigator Dr. Kris Jatana, Associate Professor and Director of Pediatric Otolaryngology Quality Improvement at Nationwide Children’s Hospital, in Columbus, OH. “Our results will change the practice guidelines for how medical professionals acutely manage button battery ingestion.”

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