



# RACGP

Royal Australian College of General Practitioners

Healthy Profession.  
Healthy Australia.



10 July 2019

Marde Bevan  
Coroner's Registrar  
Coroners Court of Victoria  
65 Kavanagh Street  
Southbank VIC 3006

Dear Ms Bevan,

**Re: Court ref: COR 2015 000592 – Isabella E Rees**

The Royal Australian College of General Practitioners (RACGP) acknowledges receipt of your letter dated 8 April 2019 regarding the death of Isabella E Rees (Court ref: COR 2015 000592).

Pursuant to Section 72(2) of the Coroners Act 2008, the RACGP responds to the recommendation as follows:

#### Recommendation

***That the Royal Australian College of General Practitioners use this finding as an educational tool to raise awareness of occult button battery ingestion and highlight the need for urgent management of ingested batteries; and to ensure there is inclusion within core curricula guidelines for management.***

The RACGP provided members with information on occult button battery ingestion and highlighted the need for urgent management of ingested batteries. This was achieved by placing an item in the RACGP In Practice newsletter available on the RACGP website, please refer to Attachment 1.

Forming the centrepiece of the [RACGP Curriculum for Australian General Practice 2016](#) is the Core Skills Unit. Core Skill CS2.2.3 – *Significantly ill* – relates to a term that may be used to describe an individual at any life stage who is at risk of actual or acute potentially life-threatening health problems. Early identification of significant illness managed in line with accepted guidelines can often improve outcomes.

The RACGP curriculum for Australian General Practice is not written to include checklists of items to be taught such as would be found in a syllabus. If the Coroner's office sought it, RACGP Victoria could meet and present how our curriculum works in order to inform Coronial recommendations.

In addition the RACGP online learning platform *gplearning* provides members with access to a number of child and adolescent education activities, including recognising the seriously ill child.

The Coroner's finding and subsequent recommendation will be referred to the National RACGP Specific Interests, Child and Young Person's Health Network for consideration.

Should you or the Coroner wish to discuss this further, please contact RACGP Victoria on (03) 8699 0303.

Yours sincerely

**Dr Cameron Loy**  
Chair, RACGP Victoria

Attachment 1 – RACGP *InPractice* item



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## Attachment 1 – RACGP *InPractice* newsletter article

### Coroners Court of Victoria – Button battery ingestion

The Coroners Court of Victoria has asked the RACGP to highlight the need for the urgent management of ingested button batteries following the recent death of a toddler.

Button batteries that are lodged in the oesophagus require immediate removal. Some symptoms that may occur following ingestion include:

- persistent or atypical croup
- chest pain
- unexplained food refusal
- unexplained gastrointestinal bleeding
- epistaxis
- regurgitating or drooling
- vomiting without fever or diarrhoea
- fever
- unexplained nasal/ear or vaginal/rectal bleeding or discharge caused by an insertion.

Visit the [Royal Children's Hospital website](#) for information on foreign body ingestion and the [ACC website](#) for information on button batteries. Additionally Kidsafe SA and SA Health have developed a [GP poster](#) providing further information.

Published in the RACGP's national newsletter, *InPractice*, on 10 May 2019