After going home, most children will not need any follow-up or further X-rays. There is no need to examine your child’s faeces to find the swallowed object.

**Key points to remember**

- If your child has swallowed a harmless object and is showing no symptoms, there is no need to seek medical advice unless you are concerned about your child.
- Most objects that children swallow are harmless, and pass through the digestive system without any problem.
- **If you think a child has swallowed a button battery or magnet, call an ambulance or go to your nearest hospital emergency department immediately. Do not induce vomiting.**
- If your child has worrying symptoms, take them to your nearest hospital emergency department. Objects that become stuck in the oesophagus, stomach or intestines may need to be removed.

**Useful Telephone Numbers**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Phone Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>NHS 111</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Emergency Department, Lister Hospital</td>
<td>01438 284333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urgent Care Centre, New QEII, Welwyn Garden City</td>
<td>01707 247549</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

You can request this information in a different format or another language.
**Introduction**

Children sometimes swallow things such as coins, small toys or beads. Most objects that children swallow are harmless and are passed through the digestive system and out with the faeces (poo) without any problem.

Sometimes, swallowed objects get stuck in the oesophagus (food pipe) and may not pass into the stomach. In these cases, a doctor will need to remove the object.

**Button batteries and magnets**

- Button batteries are small round, silver batteries found in lots of electrical toys and devices. If a button battery is swallowed and becomes stuck in the oesophagus (food pipe), it can burn through tissue in just two hours, causing severe injury or death. They can also cause burns if they're lodged in a child's nose or ear.

  If you think a child has swallowed a button battery, take them to your nearest hospital emergency department straight away or call an ambulance immediately. Do not induce vomiting.

- Magnets can be dangerous when swallowed, especially if two or more are swallowed.

  If you think your child has swallowed a magnet, go to your nearest hospital emergency department or call an ambulance.

**Signs and symptoms of swallowed objects**

Most children have no symptoms after swallowing an object, and the object will not cause any problems.

- Occasionally, the swallowed object can become stuck in the oesophagus.

**Take your child to your GP or hospital emergency department if they have:**

- trouble swallowing food
- drooling
- pain in the chest or neck

- Very rarely, the object can become stuck in the stomach or intestines.

**Take your child to your GP or hospital emergency department if they have:**

- ongoing vomiting
- abdominal (tummy) pain
- blood in their vomit or poo
- a fever

- If your child is coughing or is having difficulty breathing, the object may be in their airway or lungs - **Call an ambulance immediately if your child is having trouble breathing.**

**Treatment in hospital**

In hospital, a doctor or nurse will ask what your child has swallowed. An X-ray may be done if the swallowed object is made of material that shows up on an X-ray or if your child has worrying symptoms. Depending on what the object is and where it is in the digestive system, the object may need to be removed.

- Some objects can harm the body and may need to be removed urgently; these include button batteries and magnets.
- Objects in the oesophagus often need to be removed; this will depend on your child's symptoms.
- Most objects in the stomach or further along (in the intestines) will pass safely on their own.

**Care at home**

If doctors are unable to see a swallowed object on an X-ray and your child has no worrying symptoms, it is okay to take your child home. Observe them for any developing symptoms and take your child back to hospital if they have:

- abdominal pain
- ongoing vomiting
- blood in their vomit or poo
- a fever