Two-hour window The National Capital Poison Center estimates more than 3,500 people swallow button batteries each year in the United States. While the majority of these batteries pass through the body and are excreted, they can sometimes get stuck in the esophagus, especially in children age 6 and younger.

If a child swallows a button-battery, “the clock is ticking,” said Gary Silber, M.D., division chief, pediatric gastroenterology, Phoenix Children’s Hospital.

“The flat shape and size of a button battery, when lodged in the esophagus or the nose, create a circuit between the tissues and causes burning,” said James Heimbach, M.D., medical director, pediatric emergency department, Banner Children’s at Cardon Children’s Medical Center in Mesa. “There is a two-hour window of time for treatment before permanent damage and scarring occurs.

Possible symptoms Among other issues, possible symptoms of battery-swallowing include nausea, chest pain and gastrointestinal inflammation.

The “button battery” can get stuck in the esophagus, so sometimes it is distending and vomiting. “Hungry?” said when a button battery is present or seems to be getting progressively worse, we see one every week.

Emergency treatment Medical attention should not be delayed if there is even a remote possibility that a child swallowed a button battery.

“The clock is ticking,” said Gary Silver, M.D., division chief, pediatric gastroenterology, Phoenix Children’s Hospital.

“The quicker we get the battery out, the less extensive the damage.”

New diagnostic guidelines The CDC says up to 60 million Americans have high cholesterol, and last November, the American College of Cardiology and the American Heart Association revised their guidelines for cholesterol management.

“We’re focusing on total cholesterol only,” said Suzanne Seraf, M.D., a cardiologist in Mesa. “We’re taking a broader approach for those who should be treated. It’s now recommended that all people with diabetes and everyone with any cardiovascular disease — regardless of their cholesterol levels — he prescribes a statin medication,” she said. She recommends that if your total fasting cholesterol is above 199, discuss with your doctor whether taking a statin medication is right for you.

Meditations and medical devices For the estimated 5 million Americans who suffer from heart failure (when the heart muscle can’t pump enough blood to the body to meet the body’s needs), three or four common, affordable prescription medications take aim at most patients.

“Lower with a high-quality life for another 20 to 30 years,” said Nancy Sweetser, M.D., Ph.D., chief of cardiology and director at the Sarver Heart Center at the University of Arizona in Tucson. The medications include an ACE inhibitor, a beta blocker and an aldosterone blocking agent that block the effects of the internal hormone aldosterone, and a diuretic such as Lasix.

Heart failure can result from other forms of heart disease, Sweetser said, including blockages of the arteries that can cause heart attacks, valvular disease or a serious virus that affects the heart. Symptoms of heart failure may include shortness of breath, fatigue and weakness, and swelling of the legs, ankles and feet, she said.

Many heart failure patients may also need one of two medical devices to alleviate their symptoms, Sweetser said. One is an implantable defibrillator that restarts the heart if it stops beating effectively; the other is a special cardiac resynchronization pacemaker that can “correct disordered contraction of an asthmatic heart,” she said.

Subcutaneous defibrillators Traditional implantable defibrillators for the prevention of cardiac death require the placement of “transvenous leads” that are sewn onto the heart, deliver shocks in the heart.

“The leads may allow the introduction of infection into the heart, setting off an inflammatory response,” said Andrew Kaplan, M.D., a cardiac electrophysiologist with Banner Heart Hospital in Mesa, adding that the leads may break, requiring replacement or removal.

A new subcutaneous device (the subcutaneous defibrillator system is new and available. The S-ICD System eliminates transvenous leads (those that go through a vein into the heart), “so we can avoid potential complications,” Kaplan said.

Banner MD Anderson opens outpatient addition

Banner MD Anderson Cancer Center recently opened the second phase of its outpatient facility in Mesa, which adds an additional 33,000 square feet of patient care space and includes a separate hematology/stem cell transplant space, a plant clinic and expanded radiation oncology space.

More info: BannerMDAnderson.com

Chandler Regional named Level 1 Trauma Center

Chandler Regional Medical Center has been designated as a provisional Level 1 Trauma Center by the Arizona Department of Health Services, Bureau of Emergency Medical Services and Trauma System. Previously, critically injured patients in the Valley were transported to Phoenix or Scottsdale for treatment. The trauma team includes specialists such as orthopedic surgeons, emergency physicians, hand surgeons, neurosurgeons, orthopedic surgeons, plastic surgeons, trauma critical care surgeons, nurses and ancillary services.

More info: ChandlerRegional.org