

## Doctors warn of battery danger around children

Each year, more than 2,800 kids are treated in emergency rooms after swallowing batteries. As button batteries become more common in the home, injuries and deaths from ingesting batteries have increased nine-fold in the last decade.

The risk is higher during the holidays, with new toys, family gatherings and multiple distractions. These small batteries are found in singing greeting cards, remote controls, key fobs, calculators, toys, holiday ornaments and even grandpa's hearing aid.

"Young children love bright, shiny objects — and they tend to love putting things in their mouths," said Dr. Kimberly Ruscher, a pediatric surgeon at PeaceHealth Sacred Heart Medical Center at RiverBend. "Button, or disc batteries, are everywhere in American homes, and the right size for small children to swallow. These batteries can cause serious harm in a very short time."

Button batteries can become lodged anywhere in the nose, mouth or digestive tract. The biggest risk comes from 20-mm lithium cell batteries, as they're big enough to get stuck in the esophagus. After the battery burns through the esophagus, it can continue to injure other organs such as the trachea, aorta or other blood vessels.

"A battery can literally burn through a child's esophagus in less than two hours," Ruscher said. "It can lead to lifelong injuries or even death."

Ruscher, who also serves as chair of Safe Kids West Oregon, reports that the pediatric surgeons at Sacred Heart Medical Center at Riverbend are regularly called about patients who have swallowed button batteries. In some cases, procedures are required to remove the battery or treat the injuries caused.

She urges parents to keep any loose or spare batteries locked away, and any product that uses button batteries well out of reach.

If a parent or guardian suspects a child has ingested a battery, the child needs to be immediately taken to the emergency room.

For more information about button battery safety, visit Safe Kids Worldwide at [www.safekids.org/button-battery-safety](http://www.safekids.org/button-battery-safety).

## Rhody Society to meet to discuss hybridization

The Siuslaw Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society meets on Jan. 16, at 6:30 p.m. for refreshments followed by the program at 7 p.m. Speaker Jack Olsen from Fall Creek, Or, will be presenting a digital program on Hybridizing.

Olsen will discuss how he chooses the correct parents, pollinating, collecting seed, sowing the seed and how to grow them on to award winning flowering plants. This will be a very educational program and knowing Jack, it won't be boring.

The public is invited to come to the Presbyterian Church of the Siuslaw 3996 Highway 101 in Florence, to learn the details of this interesting process.

Call 541-997-3082 for more information

# Notarized application for change of sex begins Jan. 1

*House Bill 2673 allows Oregonians to affirm gender identity without court order*

PORTLAND — Beginning Jan. 1, people born in Oregon will be able to affirm their gender identity on a birth certificate by completing a notarized application rather than having to get a court order.

The state Vital Records office, based at the Oregon Health Authority Public Health Division, is preparing for the implementation of House Bill 2673, which allows any individual to request a name change and/or sex designation change on a birth certificate that accurately reflects their gender identity.

Prior to HB 2673's passage in 2017, a court order indicating that an individual has completed sexual reassignment was required to change the sex designation on an Oregon birth certificate.

Under HB 2673, a name or sex designation change on a birth certificate

can be requested by an individual 18 or older, or an emancipated minor; a parent or legal guardian if the registrant is younger than 18; or a legal representative of a registrant, parent or legal guardian.

Individuals who previously changed their name but have not changed their sex on their birth certificate can do so using this administrative process.

Those choosing to change their sex designation to non-binary will be able to add "X" to their birth certificate, rather than "M" for male or "F" for female.

"HB 2673 ensures any individual can request a name change and sex designation change on a birth certificate that accurately reflects their gender identity," said Jennifer Woodward, PhD, state registrar and manager of the

Vital Records office, also known as the Center for Health Statistics (CHS).

Amending a birth certificate requires a \$35 amendment fee, although that doesn't include the cost of the certificate, which are \$25 each for a short-form version and \$30 each for the long-form version.

New birth records will be provided within seven to 10 working days after the notarized application and fees have been submitted and new birth certificate has been ordered.

Applicants will receive a new certified copy of the record of live birth for the registrant (if ordered); a copy of the application form requesting the change; and correspondence from the State Registrar on the final decision.

Applications can be submitted by mail or in person at 800 NE Oregon

St., Suite 225, Portland, OR 97232.

Woodward said CHS has been busy training its staff on the new law, updating the application form for changing the name and sex on a birth certificate, and developing a new website, [www.healthoregon.org/hb2673](http://www.healthoregon.org/hb2673), which has all the forms and frequently asked questions.

It also has been getting the word out about the law with help from partner organizations such as Basic Rights Oregon, including sharing the FAQs to help guide eligible individuals through the application process.

"We are ready to begin processing applications starting Jan. 2," Woodward said, noting that although HB 2673 becomes effective Jan. 1, the state Vital Records office is closed New Year's Day, a state holiday.

## JOIN ANNUAL 'LOSE-TO-WIN-A-TON' AND GET FIT IN NEW YEAR

The Siuslaw News, PeaceHealth Peace Harbor Medical Center and Coastal Fitness & Aquatics are reaching out the Florence Area to challenge community members to successfully meet their weight-loss goals — and be entered into a drawing for a

grand prize of \$1,000.

The idea of the contest is to serve as a catalyst for improving decisions about fitness, nutrition and healthy lifestyles made by individuals, groups and institutions within the greater Florence area community.

Lose to Win is a 14-week weight-loss challenge that counts on people's competitiveness as motivation.

Participants' weights are checked weekly at Coastal Fitness & Aquatics. Each week, volunteers from PeaceHealth Peace Harbor will weigh par-

ticipants.

The top 10 participants who lose the most weight in percentage of total body weight are listed weekly by first name and percentage loss in the Siuslaw News Saturday edition.

The challenge will run from

Jan. 24 through May 2. If participants miss more than two weigh-ins, they are no longer part of the program.

Registration forms are available at the Siuslaw News, Peace Harbor Gift Shop, Coastal Fitness & Aquatics or online at [thesiuslawnews.com](http://thesiuslawnews.com).



From Day 1, parenthood is filled with cherished moments including the baby's first trip home. Each year, Florence's first born arrives home in the comfort and protection of a new child safety car seat donated by Peace Harbor Medical Center. This annual tradition is among the many ways in which Peace Harbor's Women's Services team is dedicated to keeping all of our precious moms and babies healthy and safe throughout the birthing journey.

- Labor and Delivery Tours
- Lactation Services
- Expert Maternity and Neonatal Care

## Our Women's Services Physicians

Now accepting new patients. To schedule your appointment, call **541-902-1634**.



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