

CHOKING PREVENTION

Children under five are at greater risk for choking injury and death. Deaths from choking are preventable by serving appropriate foods to children.

It is important to remember that young children may not have enough muscles to chew and swallow certain foods properly.

Steps to help children avoid choking include:

1. Be aware of the eating abilities of infants and toddlers
2. Children must be supervised at all times
3. Avoid foods that cause choking
4. Provide First Aid/CPR to children who are choking
5. Insist children eat at the table or at least while sitting down and never run or lie down with food in their mouths
6. Cut food into pieces on larger than ½" and teach them to chew their food well

HEALTHY EATING HABITS

1. Introduce solid foods only when a child is developmentally ready for them. Parents should consult with their child's doctor before introducing solid foods.
2. Don't feed food or cereal from a bottle or syringe type feeder.
3. Have the infant or toddler sitting up straight in a comfortable high chair or on a chair at the table.
4. Don't feed a child who is laughing, crying, or coughing.
5. Do not allow children to eat in their crib or bed and always closely supervise any child while he/she is eating.
6. Eat with the children and model taking small bites and chewing slowly.
7. Avoid foods that cause choking.
8. Follow serving recommendations on food containers.
9. Learn how to tell whether or not a child is choking and complete training in First Aid and CPR.

FOODS TO AVOID TO PREVENT CHOKING IN YOUNG CHILDREN

- Meat with skin, like hot dogs
- Nuts and seeds
- Large chunks of food: meat, cheese, fruit, peanut butter
- Whole grapes
- Hard, gooey or sticky candy, chewing gum and lollipops
- Popcorn
- Raw vegetables, especially carrots, cherry tomatoes, vegetables that are stringy or hard to chew

AVOID FOODS WITH THESE CHARACTERISTICS

- ✦ Firm, smooth or slippery foods that can easily slide down the throat before chewing
- ✦ Dry, small or hard foods that are difficult to chew and easy to swallow whole
- ✦ Tough or sticky foods that don't break apart readily and are hard to remove from the airway
- ✦ Large pieces of food
- ✦ Round or tube shaped foods

TIPS TO MAKE FOODS SAFER

- ✦ Cut into quarters lengthwise, then into small pieces
- ✦ Peel fruits and cut in half lengthwise
- ✦ Chop finely or into thin strips
- ✦ Spread peanut butter thinly on crackers or bread

DANGEROUS HOUSEHOLD ITEMS

- ✦ Balloons- inflated or deflated
 - ✦ Coins
 - ✦ Small balls, marbles
 - ✦ Toys with small parts, small game parts
 - ✦ Toys that can be squeezed to fit entirely into a child's mouth
 - ✦ Pen or marker caps, crayon pieces
 - ✦ Small button type batteries
 - ✦ Medicine syringes
 - ✦ Safety pins, nails, tacks, screws, paper clips
 - ✦ Jewelry, buttons
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- Follow age recommendations on toy packages
 - Avoid toys with small parts
 - Be aware of older children's actions. Many choking incidents occur when older brothers or sisters give small toys or small objects to a younger child
 - Do not let infants and young children play with coins