

CHOKING HAZARDS FOR YOUNG CHILDREN

Some foods are easy for young children to choke on when swallowing:

- Children under age 5 are at greatest risk for choking injuries and death.
- Foods that are choking hazards include foods that are round and could conform to the size of a child's trachea (wind pipe). The size of a young child's trachea is approximately the size of a drinking straw in diameter.
- Children should sit up straight when eating, should have sufficient number of teeth, and the muscular and developmental ability needed to chew and swallow the foods chosen.
- Remember, not all children will be at the same developmental level. Children with special health care needs are especially vulnerable to choking risks.

Foods that may be choking hazards:

- Peanuts or other nuts
- Chewing gum
- Popcorn
- Chips
- Round slices of hotdogs or sausages
- Carrot sticks or baby carrots
- Tough meat
- Hard candy
- Whole grapes or melon balls
- Cherry tomatoes
- Large pieces of raw fruits and vegetables
- Ice cubes or cheese cubes



To prevent choking on foods:

- Have children eat in a high chair or at the table, or at least while sitting down. Do not let them run, walk, play, or lie down with food in their mouth.
- Keep a watchful eye on children while they eat.
- Cut food for children into pieces no larger than one-half inch ($\frac{1}{2}$ "), and teach them to chew their food well.
 - Slice hotdogs and sausages lengthwise and then into small pieces.
 - Cut meat and chicken across the grain into small pieces.
 - Slice grapes, cherry tomatoes, and other round foods in half and then again in half, removing seeds and pits from fruit
 - Cook carrots or celery sticks until slightly soft, grate them, or cut them into small pieces or thin "matchsticks".
- Spread peanut butter thinly on bread or crackers. A thick "glob" of peanut butter can cause choking.
- Offer liquids between mouthfuls of food, but liquids and solids should not be swallowed at the same time.

Be proactive, and routinely check for other potential choking hazards on floors and areas where children play or can reach:

- Latex balloons
 - Coins
 - Marbles
 - Small toys or toys with small parts
 - Pen or marker caps
 - Push pins, thumbtacks or paper clips
 - Buttons
 - Rubber bands
 - Batteries
 - Hair barrettes, beads or bows
 - Nails or Screws
 - Earrings or other jewelry
 - Teething beads or necklaces
 - Crayons
 - Small stones
 - Pet food
 - Medicine syringes
 - Holiday decorations including tinsel and lights
 - Stuffing from furniture or toys
 - Anything labeled “may be a choking hazard”
 - Anything that can fit inside a 35mm film canister or choke tube
- Contact your local CCHC for choke tubes



**CHOKING INJURIES AND DEATHS MAY BE PREVENTABLE
ALL CAREGIVERS SHOULD BE TRAINED IN INFANT
AND CHILD CPR AND CHOKING EMERGENCIES**

