

CHOKING PREVENTION

FOR BABIES & CHILDREN

Source: [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org)

Once children start to crawl or eat table foods, it's important to protect them from choking. Children younger than 5 years old can easily choke on food and small objects they can reach. Here's what parents and caregivers need to know.

HOW DOES CHOKING START?

Choking happens when food or small objects get caught in the throat and block the airway. This can prevent oxygen from getting to the lungs and the brain. When the brain goes without oxygen for more than 4 minutes, it can lead to brain damage or even death.

COMMON CHOKING HAZARDS

Balloons, balls, marbles, pieces of toys and foods cause the most choking deaths.

Foods that are choking hazards for children:

- Hot dogs
- Hard, gooey, or sticky candy
- Chewing gum
- Nuts and seeds
- Whole grapes
- Raw vegetables, such as carrot sticks
- Raw fruit chunks, such as apple chunks
- Popcorn
- Chunks of peanut butter or other nut butters
- Marshmallows
- Meat sticks/sausages
- Chunks of meat
- Chunks of cheese or string cheese

Household items that are choking hazards for children:

- Balloons
- Coins
- Marbles
- Toys with small parts
- Toys that can be squeezed to fit entirely into a child's mouth
- Small balls
- Pen or marker caps
- Small button-type batteries or lithium coin batteries
- Medicine syringes

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO PREVENT CHILDREN FROM CHOKING

- Sign up for an approved class in basic first aid, CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) or emergency prevention.
- Always supervise mealtime for infants and young children. Insist that children eat at the table or sit down when they eat.
- Remember that balloons pose a choking risk to children up to 8 years of age.
- Keep dangerous foods from children until 4 years of age or older, depending on each child's development and maturity level AND cut food for infants and young children into pieces no larger than one-half inch. Teach them to chew their food well.
- Avoid toys with small parts, and keep other small household items out of the reach of infants and young children. Follow the age recommendations on toy packages.
- Do not let infants and young children play with coins.



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