

# Choking Prevention

## Choking Prevention

Each year more than 2,800 people die from choking. Choking occurs when food or small objects block the airway. This prevents oxygen from getting to the lungs and brain. When the brain goes without oxygen for more than four minutes, brain damage or even death may occur. Learning first aid and CPR can help in an emergency.

### Common Causes of Choking

- ◆ Swallowing large pieces of poorly chewed food.
- ◆ Eating too fast.
- ◆ Eating while talking excitedly or laughing.
- ◆ Walking, playing, or running with food or objects in the mouth.

### Dangerous Foods

Do not feed children younger than four years old round, firm food unless it is chopped completely. When infants and young children don't grind or chew their food well, they may attempt to swallow it whole. The following foods can be choking hazards:

- ◆ Hotdogs
- ◆ Whole grapes
- ◆ Popcorn
- ◆ Nuts
- ◆ Raisins
- ◆ Peanut butter
- ◆ Chunks of meat or cheese
- ◆ Hard or sticky candy
- ◆ Raw carrots

### Dangerous Household Items

Items that fit through a cardboard toilet paper roll are too small for a child under three years old. Latex balloons are the most common cause of toy-related choking death among children. Here are some other examples of things to keep away from infants and children: coins, jewelry, marbles, safety pins, tacks, screws, pen or marker caps, and small toys or toy parts that can fit entirely into a child's mouth. Also, be cautious of long strings or cords that could strangle a child. Make sure to follow the age recommendations on toy packages.

### What You Can Do To Prevent Choking

- ◆ Have children eat sitting down – not running, walking, or playing with food in their mouths.
- ◆ Cut food into small pieces and teach children to chew food well.
- ◆ Supervise children. Many choking incidents occur when older siblings give dangerous foods or small objects to a younger child.



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