



How Can I Keep my Child from Choking?

(adapted from Healthy Steps)

There are few things more frightening than watching any child choke. If it's your child, guilt is added to the fear. Infants' natural tendency to mouth objects makes them particularly vulnerable to choking. Many household items as well as foods can cause choking. Before starting solid foods or when your baby begins crawling, ask your doctor or nurse practitioner to show you what to do if your child should choke. Contact your local Red Cross to learn more about CPR and first aid.

Certain food should either not be given or prepared very carefully because of the risk of choking. These include:

- Hot dogs-should be peeled and diced
- Grapes-should be peeled and cut in half
- Raw vegetables
- Peanuts
- Popcorn
- Hard candy
- Peanut butter sandwich-only a little bit of peanut butter and cut up in tiny pieces

Common household items that cause choking can include:

- Coins
- Safety & diaper pins
- Buttons
- Small batteries
- Balloons

Many toys also contain small parts or loose parts that could break off and be a potential choking hazard. All toys should be inspected periodically for loose parts. The age range printed on toys by the manufacturer can help parents decide which toys will be safe for their children.