

# Choking Prevention



*Choking is a year-round hazard among children and a leading cause of injury and death, especially among children 3 years of age or younger. Food, coins and small toys can cause choking if they get caught in the throat and block the airway.*

## Risky Foods for Young Children

Children younger than 4 years of age should not be given round, firm foods unless they have been chopped into very small, non-circular pieces. The following foods are common choking hazards:

- Hot dogs and sausages
- Nuts and seeds
- Chunks of meat or cheese
- Whole grapes and fruit chunks, like apples
- Hard, gooey, or sticky candy
- Chunks of peanut butter
- Raw vegetables, such as carrots
- Chewing gum
- Marshmallows
- Popcorn

## Dangerous Household Items

- Latex balloons
- Coins
- Marbles, small balls or ball-shaped objects (less than 1.75" in diameter)
- Toys with small parts or toys that can be squeezed to fit entirely into a child's mouth
- Pen or marker caps
- Small button-type batteries

## Prevention Tips

- Learn first aid for choking and CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).
- Be aware that latex balloons pose a choking risk to both young children and older children.
- Children should never run, walk, play or lie down with food in their mouths.
- Cut food for young children into small pieces.
- Always supervise mealtimes.
- Be aware of older children's actions. Choking incidents can occur when an older child gives dangerous foods, toys or small objects to a younger child.
- Avoid toys with small parts and keep small household items out of the reach of infants and young children.
- Small parts test devices (such as the one pictured) are available at many toy stores and baby specialty stores. If the part can fit in the tube, it is too small for a young child.
- Check the minimum age recommendations on toy packages. Age guidelines reflect the safety of a toy based on potential choking hazards as well as children's development.
- Do not allow young children to play with coins.