

CHOKING & STRANGULATION

THE PROBLEM

Suffocation is the leading cause of accidental death in children less than 1 years old and the 4th leading cause in children younger than 4.¹

ESSENTIAL FACTS

- It only takes 4 minutes without oxygen for a child to suffer permanent brain damage.
- Half of all toy related deaths involve balloon pieces and coins.
- To reduce the risk of choking, the American Academy of Pediatrics advises keeping the following items away from children under 4 years of age:
 - latex balloons
 - coins
 - marbles
 - toys with small parts
 - toys that can be compressed to fit entirely into a child's mouth
 - small balls
 - pen or marker caps
 - small button-type batteries
 - medicine syringes



YOUR PRESCRIPTION FOR SAFETY

- Only allow children to play with toys that are labeled for their age level.
- Toys that can fit easily inside an empty toilet paper tube are choking hazards for small children. Keep balloons, small balls, and coins out of the reach of children under age 8.
- Do not feed children under age four firm foods unless they are chopped completely.
- Avoid the use of ribbons, necklaces, and pacifier strings in young children. Remove hood and neck strings from all children's outerwear.
- Make sure that all home window blind and drapery cords are out of the reach of a child.
- Ensure that plastic bags and dry cleaning bags are kept out of reach of children.

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD IS CHOKING

- Look in the mouth for objects.
 - If object is seen, remove it with a finger sweep.
 - If object is *not* seen, DO NOT sweep finger into the mouth. This may worsen the situation.
- If child is less than 1 years old, alternate series of sharp blows to the back (between the shoulder blades) with chest compressions.
 1. Hold the infant face-down on your forearm. Support the infant's head and jaw with your hand. Give up to five back blows with the heel of your free hand.
 2. If the object comes out and the infant begins to breathe after only a few back blows, stop the back blows.
 3. If the object does not come out after five back blows, turn the infant onto his or her back and give up to five chest thrusts, supporting the head and neck. Hold the infant with one hand and arm. Use two or three fingers of your free hand to push on the breastbone just as you press for chest compressions during CPR. Stop chest thrusts if the object is forced out.
 4. Alternate giving five back blows and five chest thrusts until the object comes out or the infant becomes unresponsive.
- If child is greater than 2 years old, attempt the Heimlich maneuver.
- If the infant becomes unresponsive, shout for help and start CPR. Chest compressions may force the object out. If you are alone with the child and these steps don't work after about one minute, phone 911.

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