

Choking and Strangulation Prevention Tips

Everything you need to know to keep your kids safe from choking or strangulation.

Is there a cell phone or set of car keys that hasn't made its way into your toddler's mouth? We didn't think so. Don't despair – there are simple tips that can help keep your children from getting injured as a result of their compulsive need to teethe, suck and drool on everyday objects and toys.

Make Meals Fun and Safe

- Cut food for toddlers into tiny pieces. Children under 5 should not eat small, round or hard foods, including pieces of hot dogs, cheese sticks or chunks, hard candy, nuts, grapes, marshmallows or popcorn.
- Remember to have young kids eat in a high chair or at the table, not while lying down or playing. It is important to supervise your babies when they are eating or playing.



Keep Small Objects Out of Reach

- See the world from a child's point of view. Get on the floor on your hands and knees so that you are at your child's eye level. Look for and remove small items.
- Keep small objects such as buttons, beads, jewelry, pins, nails, marbles, coins, stones and tacks out of reach and sight.

Among children treated in emergency rooms for non-fatal choking incidents, almost 60 percent were food-related. Overall, 13 percent of cases involved swallowing coins and 19 percent involved candy or gum.

Be On the Lookout for Magnets

- Keep small magnets away from children. These include magnets found in construction sets, children's toys or stress-relieving adult desk toys; refrigerator magnets; and rare-earth magnets such as Buckyballs.
- Inspect games or toys that include magnets. Inspect children's play areas regularly for missing or dislodged magnets as well.
- Seek medical attention immediately if you suspect that magnets have been swallowed. Look for abdominal symptoms, such as pain, nausea, vomiting or diarrhea. Note that in X-rays, multiple magnetic pieces may appear as a single object.



Keep Cords Out of Reach

- Keep cords and strings, including those attached to window blinds, out of your child's reach. Move all cribs, beds, furniture and toys away from windows and window cords.
- If you live in a home where you are not allowed to replace your window coverings, follow basic window cord safety rules and order free retrofit kits from the Window Covering Safety Council at www.windowcoverings.org.



Check Your Child's Clothes and Accessories

- Remove necklaces, purses, scarves, helmets or clothing with drawstrings when children are playing or sleeping.
- Don't tie strings or ribbons to a pacifier or toy. Remember that jewelry can be dangerous around your baby. Remove bibs before bedtime or nap time.

Find the Perfect Toy for the Right Age

- Consider your child's age and development when purchasing [toys or games](#). It's worth a second to read the instructions and warning labels to make sure it's just right for your child.
- Before you've settled on the perfect toy, check to make sure there aren't any small parts or other potential choking hazards.
- When cleaning up, avoid toy chests that have no lids or safety hinges, as these could pose hazards to your child.



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