

Choking Safety



True Story

A 2-year-old toddler was chewing on a balloon at her home. She accidentally swallowed it and had difficulty breathing. Emergency personnel took her to the hospital where the balloon was removed, but the child was pronounced dead.

-From the files of MECAP
(Medical Examiners and Coroners Alert Project)

The Facts

- In 2002, 885 children ages 14 and younger died from accidental airway obstruction injuries. In 2003, nearly 18,000 children were treated in hospital emergency rooms for airway obstruction injuries.
- Children are at risk for choking on small, round foods such as hot dogs, candies, nuts, grapes, carrots and popcorn.
- Non-food choking hazards tend to be round or conforming objects such as coins, small balls and balloons.
- Airway obstruction injuries can also result from entanglement or entrapment, such as window covering cords, clothing drawstrings or furniture slats.

What You Can Do

- Always supervise young children while they are eating and playing.
- Don't allow children 6 and younger to eat small, round or hard foods, including hot dogs.
- Keep small items such as safety pins, jewelry and buttons out of children's reach.
- Ensure that children play with age-appropriate toys according to safety labels.
- Inspect old and new toys regularly for damage.
- Learn first aid and CPR.



Safe Kids Greater Des Moines, led by Blank Children's Hospital, is a grassroots organization dedicated to preventing unintentional injury in children ages 0-14.

For more information call (515) 241-6293 or visit www.dsmsafekids.org.