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supported by Griffin Hospital and the
Valley Parish Nurse Program

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203-946-8186

supported by New Haven Health Department
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Big changes are coming to the Safe Kids Connecticut quarterly newsletter. This issue (Spring) will be our last paper edition of the newsletter that will be sent to you via postal mail. In an effort to cut costs and help the environment, starting with the summer edition, we will be sending out our newsletters via email only. Of course, both editions of the newsletter will continue to be posted on our website: www.ctsafekids.org

Please send me email at kbrock@ccmckids.org so that we can be sure to email the summer and future editions directly to you. As with the print version, you are welcome to share/forward the newsletter to whomever you think would benefit from the information. The more, the merrier!

Choking Safety

Choking is a serious issue that many parents and caregivers may not think about. Each year, approximately 900 children nationwide under the age of 15 die from airway obstruction injuries (which include choking, suffocation and unintentional strangulation.) Kids under age 5, however, are most at risk.

The majority of choking injuries occur with food. To help prevent these injuries, do not allow children under age 3 to eat small, round or hard foods. This includes small pieces of hot dogs, hard candy, nuts, grapes and popcorn. Other hazardous food items to watch out for are raw vegetables, jellybeans, raw unpeeled fruit slices, dried fruits, grapes or chunks of meat.

What else can you do?



SUPERVISE KIDS WHILE THEY ARE EATING.

- Cut foods into small pieces and give babies soft foods that they don't need to chew.
- Have children sit in a high chair or at a table while they eat. Don't let kids eat or suck on anything like candy while lying down or playing.
- Encourage kids to eat slowly.



SEE WHAT THEY SEE

- Keep small objects that are potential choking hazards out of your children's reach.
- 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 such as jewelry, coins, buttons, pins, nails and stones.
- Keep all plastic bags out of reach.



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Choking Safety

(continued from page 1)



MAKE TOYS SAFE

- Have kids only play with age-appropriate toys. The toys hazard labels are not based development of child, but rather safety. For example, toys labeled for kids over 3 years should be kept away from kids under 3 as these toys may have small parts and could cause choking if placed in the mouth.
- Check toys for damage. Any with sharp edges or loose small parts should be repaired or thrown away immediately.
- Use Mylar balloons instead of latex balloons. Only kids over the age of 8 should be allowed to blow up balloons.
- Sign up to receive product recalls with the Consumer Product Safety Commission at www.cpsc.gov.



LEARN CPR

- Learn CPR for infants and children and the Heimlich maneuver for choking.

Information courtesy of *Safe Kids USA*

Summer Safety

Trips to the emergency room for hydration-related injuries are consistently in the top 10 reasons for these visits for kids in Connecticut. Make sure that kids and adults are staying hydrated this summer, drinking water or sports drinks before, during and after play. •



REPORTING ON CHILDHOOD INJURY

Nonfatal choking among children

Garry Lapidus, PA-C, MPH, Director, Injury Prevention Center, Connecticut Children's Medical Center; Associate Professor of Pediatrics and Public Health, University of Connecticut School of Medicine

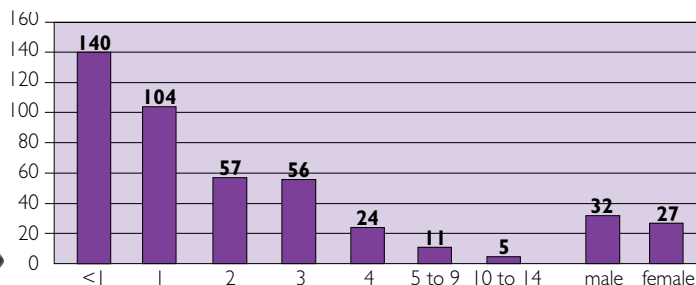


In 2001, nearly 18,000 children were treated in emergency departments for choking-related episodes. Candy/gum accounted for 19% of cases and 13% choked on coins. Although the majority of patients were treated and released, 1,844 (10%) were hospitalized or transferred to a facility for a higher level of care.

Several injury prevention strategies can reduce the risk for choking in children, including public education, product-safety labeling, and changes in product design. Because complete removal of all choking hazards is unlikely, parents and caregivers should learn how to treat a child who is choking. •

Sources: *MMWR*, 51(42);945-948. Centers for Disease Control, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS.

Rate (per 100,000) of nonfatal choking-related emergency department visits, by age, sex, U.S., 2001 (n=17,537)



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