





Clear Airways: Protect your children from harm




Small children have small airways that can be easily blocked. Every year, nearly 1,000 children die from unintentional suffocation, strangulation or choking. Babies and toddlers under age 3 are especially vulnerable to suffocation because they cannot lift their heads or escape from tight places.

Like most injuries, airway-related injuries occur mostly in the home. For example, 60% of cases of infant suffocation involve bedding. Suffocation hazards, in addition to bedding, include plastic bags and being trapped in tight, close spaces such as laundry machines, car trunks and toy chests.

Most choking incidents in children involve food. Parents and caregivers should be especially cautious with small, round foods such as hot dogs, candies, nuts, grapes, carrots and popcorn. Other common choking hazards include coins, small balls and balloons. Below are some tips to keep kids safe:



-  **Supervise.** The best way to keep your kids safe is active supervision. Pay attention to product labels. If a toy is labeled ages 3 and up, that doesn't refer to the child's maturity or intelligence, it means a younger child could choke to death on small parts.
-  **Test small objects.** If an object can fit through a standard 1½-inch toilet paper tube, don't let your child play with it.
-  **Remove drawstrings.** In the past 20 years, at least 22 children have been strangled by drawstrings in clothing, mostly as a result of drawstrings getting tangled in playground equipment.
-  **Modify window cords.** Install safety tassels for the ends of curtain pulls or cut the loops at the end. Since 1991, at least 130 children have been strangled by the cords of window blinds or curtains.

-  **Inspect your baby's crib.** A safe crib has no more than 2⅝ inches of space (about the size of a soda can) between slats. The crib should not be placed near a window and should not have anything hanging above it on a ribbon or string longer than seven inches. Kids under 6 should not sleep in the top bunk of a bunk bed, and the bed frame and guardrails should not be more than 3⅝ inches apart.
-  **Avoid thick, soft bedding for babies and toddlers.** To reduce the risk of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome, always lay babies down on their backs to sleep until they know how to turn themselves over.
-  **Learn CPR.** In less than three hours, parents can learn effective skills that can make the difference between life and death for a choking child. •

Information courtesy of Safe Kids USA

REPORTING ON CHILDHOOD INJURY

Choking and suffocation

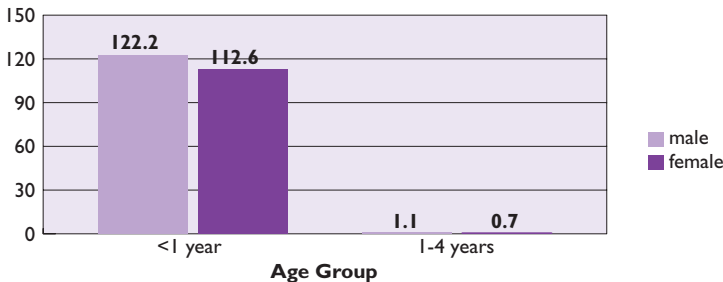
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Choking on food or objects, aspirating them into the airway, and suffocation by materials that block the external airway are of special concern in very young children. In the U.S., over 637 infants under 1 year of age and 148 children 1 to 4 years of age die each year. Death rates are highest among infants under one year of age. In addition to the deaths, there are estimated 18,000 non-fatal injuries among children under 0-4 years of age resulting in an emergency department visit.

Size, shape, and consistency are major determinants of whether a food or object is apt to block the airway and lead to death. Round foods are especially hazardous, as are foods that are pliable and conform to the airway, or of a size that can obstruct the airway: hot dogs, round candies, nuts, and grapes are the leading culprits in fatal choking. Similarly, young children are endangered by little balls, pacifiers, squeeze toys or rattles, and balloons (either uninflated, underinflated, or pieces thereof).

Unintentional suffocation death rates (per 100,000), 1990-2002



Source: National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, WISQARS

For more information, please contact:

Connecticut SAFE KIDS 860-545-9988

or your local SAFE KIDS Chapter or Coalition

Greater Waterbury Chapter 203-709-3655

supported by St. Mary's Hospital and Waterbury Medical Association

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supported by Griffin Hospital

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supported by Lawrence & Memorial Hospital

Check out the Connecticut Poison Control Center's cool interactive fun with Lenny, their funky monkey, who will teach kids of all ages about poison safety.
<http://poisoncontrol.uchc.edu>



Funding Available!



Keep Kids Safe License Plate Grants are available again! Please visit www.ctsafekids.org to download an application. Applications are to be postmarked by October 10, 2005.

Keep Halloween safe

Halloween can be dangerous for pedestrian trick-or-treaters. Below are some tips for a safe Halloween!

COSTUME

- My costume is short and snug.
- My shoes fit.
- My costume props are flexible.
- I can see easily out of my costume.



STREETS

- Drivers can see me and my costume in the dark.
- I cross streets only at crosswalks and intersections.
- I look both ways before crossing the street.
- I trick-or-treat with an adult.

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