

CHOKING PREVENTION FOR CHILDREN

1. Be especially watchful of children under three years of age.

Infants and children under three years of age are inclined to put things in their mouths. Choking occurs when a small object or piece of food block the airway, which can result in suffocation and death.

2. Keep plastic bags away from children.

Children die each year from suffocation due to plastic bags, most under one year of age. Keep all plastic bags away from children, especially toy storage bags, dry cleaning-bags, grocery bags, and garbage bags.

3. Remove or replace old blinds with unsafe blind cords.

The U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) has identified window coverings with cords as one of the top five hidden hazards in the home. Each year, children die from window cord strangulation and others suffer a near strangulation. In recent years, CPSC has recalled over five million window coverings, including Roman shades, roller and roll-up blinds, and vertical and horizontal blinds. Get more information at: www.windowcoverings.org

4. Put away unsafe objects everyday.

Homes and child care centers must be continually childproofed for safety. Small and/or sharp objects should be kept out of a child's reach.

5. Give children the right toy at the right time.

Chose age-appropriate toys by following the age guidelines on toy packages. Inspect all toys regularly for breakage or loose parts. Purchase a small parts tester at your local toy or baby store. If an object fits in the tester, it is a choking hazard for children under age three.

6. Give children the right food at the right time.

When feeding your children, keep it safe, cut it small, and keep kids seated. Selecting and preparing appropriate foods for young children can help prevent airway obstruction. Children should eat only when sitting down, and be encouraged to take small bites and eat slowly. Be especially careful about the following foods for children under age six:

- Raw vegetables such as celery, carrots, and peas
- Cherry Tomatoes and whole olives
- Nuts, sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds
- Hard candy, lollipops, and cough drops
- Soft candies with a firm texture such gummi candies
- Marshmallows, taffy, caramels, and jellybeans
- Whole grapes and cherries with pits
- Dried fruits such as raisins or apricots
- Chunks of foods, especially meat, poultry, and cheese
- Hot dogs or sausages served whole or cut in "coins"
- Spoonfuls of peanut butter
- Snack chips and popcorn

Sponsored by the Nevada Administrative Team to Review the Death of Children.

Information adapted from the National SAFE KIDS Campaign, the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), and the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services.

