

Choking

Children, particularly those aged from 1 to 5, often put objects in their mouth. This is a normal part of how they explore the world.



Some small objects, such as marbles, beads, small parts from toys, and button batteries can end up in their mouth and are just the right size to get stuck in a child's airway and cause choking.







The best way to avoid choking is to make sure that small objects like these are kept out of your child's reach.



Preparing foods



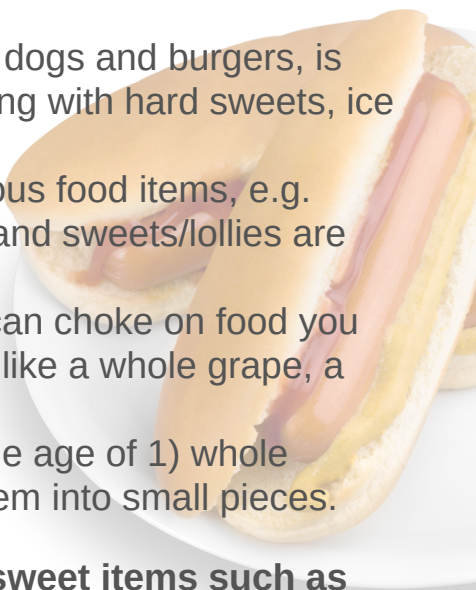
-  Always cut up food to make it safer to eat.
-  Chop foods into sticks or strips as opposed to lumps e.g. cheese sticks not cubes, cucumber sticks/batons not slices.
-  Consider softening firm fruit and vegetables (such as carrots, broccoli, and apples) by steaming or simmering until soft.
-  Cut small round fruits like grapes, cherries, berries, strawberries, and cherry tomatoes, into small pieces: cut lengthways and then cut them in half again.

Foods to avoid

- Reconstituted meat, like hot dogs and burgers, is one of the main dangers along with hard sweets, ice cubes, popcorn, and nuts.
- Keep an eye out for dangerous food items, e.g. chewing gum, bubble gum, and sweets/lollies are the ones to watch.
- Babies and young children can choke on food you think is quite soft and small, like a whole grape, a cube of jelly, marshmallows.
- Do not give babies (under the age of 1) whole raisins or dried fruits. Cut them into small pieces.



Be particularly aware of sweet items such as mini eggs around Easter time - these are the same size as a toddler's airway.



Meal time safety



Things you can do:

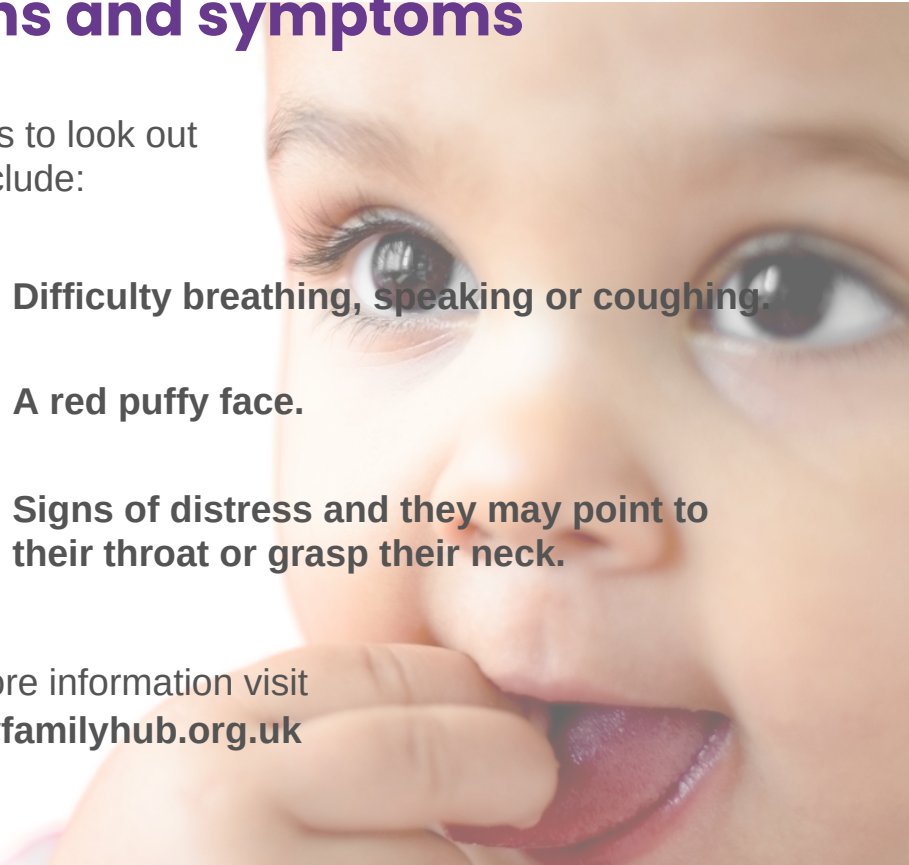
- Always supervise your child/children during meal and snack times.
- Ensure your child gets into the routine of sitting whilst eating. Sitting still will give children a chance to chew and swallow properly.
- Be aware of the high-risk foods and always cut up food to make it safer to eat.

Signs and symptoms

Things to look out for include:

- ✓ **Difficulty breathing, speaking or coughing.**
- ✓ **A red puffy face.**
- ✓ **Signs of distress and they may point to their throat or grasp their neck.**

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Choking: What to do



If you think your child is choking and cannot breathe properly:



Shout for help.



Get the child out of the highchair (if applicable).



If you can see the object, try to remove it. Don't poke blindly or repeatedly with your fingers. You could make things worse by pushing the object further in and making it harder to remove.



If your child is coughing loudly, encourage them to carry on coughing to bring up what they're choking on and don't leave them.



Support their chest and chin with one hand and - with the heel of your hand - give 5 sharp blows between the shoulder blades.

Attribution source: NHS website, St John Ambulance, Child Accident Prevention Trust, Foundation Years

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