



### Choking Prevention

Young children can easily choke on food and everyday objects. You can help prevent children from choking by offering the right kinds of foods and watching for choking hazards.

By sitting with children while they eat, you can watch how the children eat and help prevent choking. Teach children to eat only in the eating area and be sure that the children sit down while eating and that he or she chews carefully.

To prevent children from choking, use care when you select and prepare food. Do not give round, firm foods to children younger than age 4 unless the food is chopped completely.

Foods that can be choking hazards include:

- Seeds (for example, sunflower or watermelon)
- Nuts
- Popcorn
- Hot dogs
- Chunks of peanut butter
- Raw vegetables
- Raisins
- Whole grapes
- Chunks of meat or cheese
- Hard or sticky candy
- Chewing gum
- Fruit chunks, such as apple chunks



Prepare food for young children in ways that reduce their risk of choking.

Here are some tips:

- **Fruit with skins or pits, such as apples or apricots.** Remove pits and peel fruits before giving them to your child. Fruits can also be diced or cooked and mashed.
- **Fish or chicken with bones.** Carefully cut the meat off the bone and then into small pieces. Check meat thoroughly for any signs of bones.
- **Grapes.** Peel and mash grapes before serving.
- **Beans** (green, string, lima, kidney, and others the size of a marble or larger). Mash before serving.
- **Peas.** Although peas are small individually, a child who eats more than one pea at a time may choke.
- **Whole carrots.** A child may break off too big a bite and choke. Cook carrots and cut them into smaller pieces, or cut raw carrots into thin slices.
- **Hot dogs and sausages.** Slice and dice these meats. You may want to remove the skin before cutting them. Healthy Beginnings does not recommend serving these foods in child care.

Don't allow children to eat while he or she is walking, running, or playing.

*Adapted from Health Link BC, Choking Prevention in Small Children*