



CHOKING PREVENTION

CHOKING: This occurs when a person cannot breathe because food, a toy/object, or other material is stuck inside of their throat. This blocks the person's breathing tube and stops air from getting into their lungs. This can cause death!

DID YOU KNOW?

- Suffocation from choking is the third leading cause of death in home and community settings.
- The Division's members often have diagnoses such as Seizure Disorder, Autism, Cerebral Palsy, and Intellectual Disability which increases their risk of choking.
- Choking events ending in death most often involve hot dogs, popcorn, and peanut butter.



RISK FACTORS

These increase the chance of choking:



- Chaotic snack & meal times
- Eating while standing, running, walking, or lying down
- Eating and drinking in a moving vehicle
- Poor supervision during mealtimes for:
 - Members who have chewing, swallowing, and other eating difficulties
 - Members with behaviors or conditions that involve eating non-food items
- Activities such as games or crafts during mealtimes
- Serving foods such as hot dogs, popcorn, peanut butter, sticky & hard candies
- Failing to follow prescribed or recommended diets
- Medical conditions such as seizures, intellectual disability, impaired mobility

BE ALERT!

Always give your full attention to members when food is served. Don't be tempted to use meal and snack times to "catch up" on duties or as a "break". Your supervision is vital to the safety of the individuals you serve.



PREVENT A CHOKING EVENT

- Plan quiet, orderly snack and meal times (post mealtime rules).
- Designate specific staff to monitor each meal.
- Do not allow members with eating/swallowing difficulties to eat alone or without supervision.
- Do not schedule games, crafts, or other activities during meals.
- Discourage eating and drinking in moving vehicles.
- Use caution or avoid serving hot dogs, sausage, popcorn, hard candy, nuts & seeds, chunks of peanut butter, sticky foods (fruit roll-ups, gel candy, marshmallows, etc.).
- Identify individuals who might ingest non-food items and keep their "preferred" objects out- of-sight and out-of-reach.



SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF CHOKING

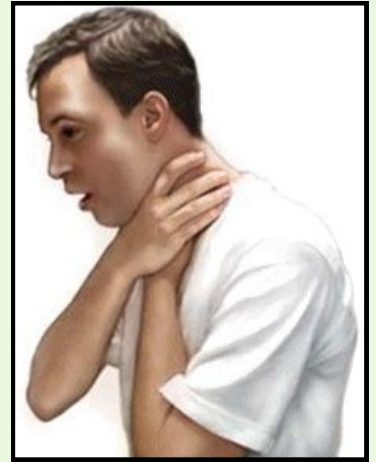
INITIAL CHOKING

- UNIVERSAL SIGN FOR CHOKING: One or both hands at the neck area
- Inability to talk or breathe
- Forceful coughing, wheezing and difficulty breathing

VERY LATE LIFE-THREATING SIGNS OF CHOKING

CALL 9-1-1 IMMEDIATELY!

- Lack of alertness
- Unconsciousness
- Pale or bluish color to lips and/or fingernails



VENDOR ACTION ITEMS

- Train all staff to call 9-1-1 FIRST (*before any other call or action*) when choking is suspected
- Confirm and monitor the required CPR and First Aid Training for all staff is current (maintain files)
- Have a PLAN for
 - Supervision of individuals at risk for choking or who have swallowing issues
 - Supervision of individuals who eat or swallow non-food items
 - Ensuring meeting the needs of individuals with special dietary requirements



EMERGENCY

Call or have someone call 9-1-1 immediately when choking is suspected:

- Staff trained in CPR and First Aid will give assistance for “conscious” or “unconscious” choking victim as directed in their certified training until emergency personnel arrive.
- Staff will follow directions given by emergency personnel upon their arrival.



Additional Resources:

http://www.redcross.org/images/MEDIA_CustomProductCatalog/m4240176_ConsciousChokingPoster_EN.pdf

<http://www.safekids.org/tip/choking-and-strangulation-prevention-tips>

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/choking.html>

CHOKING PREVENTION INFORMATION FACT SHEET is #5 in a series of SAFETY INFORMATION FACT SHEETS compiled by the DDD Quality Assurance Unit. Fact Sheets are available upon request and posted on the Division's Website: https://www.azdes.gov/developmental_disabilities/ (Click on “News & Events”). Issued November 2014

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