

Small children will put almost anything and everything in their mouths. Help keep them safe by keeping these small objects out of their reach:

- Small toys – tiny figures, balls or marbles, or toys with small parts
- Vinyl cling decorations for windows
- Any type of plastic bag, latex balloon, latex/vinyl gloves, or Styrofoam object
- Jewelry – rings, earrings, charms, etc.
- Barrettes, hair clips, etc.
- damaged or loose nipples on pacifiers or bottles
- Band-Aids (gauze and tape are safer choices for bandaging)
- nails, tacks, screws, staples, safety pins
- crayon pieces, erasers, pen and marker caps
- buttons (loose as well as those attached to clothing), button batteries, coins, tokens

**Check all toys with a choke tube or the inside of a standard toilet paper roll to make sure toys are not choking hazards. If they fit into the choke tube or toilet paper roll, they are not recommended to use with children under 4 years of age. If measuring with a ruler/tape measure, objects are recommended to be 1 and 1/4” or larger in diameter and 2 and 1/4” or longer in length.**

**Maintain a safe environment for children to play in – check daily for safety and choking hazards. Get down on your hands and knees so you can see things from a child’s level when inspecting the area. The toys should be checked daily to make sure they are not broken, loose, or missing parts.**

If you have mixed ages of children, be especially careful to separate the toys. Find safe areas for the older children to play with their small toys out of the little children’s reach.

Food can also cause choking in children. **Do not serve the following items to children less than 4 years of age:**

- nuts, seeds, peanuts
- hard candy, lollipops, and cough drops; taffy; marshmallows; caramels and jellybeans
- raw vegetables – such as celery, carrots, peas; cherry or grape tomatoes; and whole olives
- popcorn
- raw, unpeeled fruit slices such as apples and pears; whole grapes, cherries with pits, and dried fruits such as raisins or apricots

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- spoonfuls of peanut butter
- chunks of foods, especially meat; hot dogs or sausages, whole or sliced in rounds; cheese cubes
- fish with bones
- ice cubes
- pretzels, chips

Children are at risk for choking when they eat for the following reasons: they do not chew long enough to make food small enough to go down their throat; they may not yet have the back teeth they need to grind foods; they may try to swallow too much food at one time; they may have difficulty swallowing liquids and solids together; they may have too much activity going on while eating.

**Cut infant food into chunks ¼” or smaller; cut toddler food into chunks ½” or smaller.**

**Children should only be allowed to eat at the table or in a highchair in a sitting position – don’t allow children to walk, run, or lie down while eating.**

**Never leave children alone when they are eating – even for a second. A choking child isn’t able to cry or to call out for help.**

**Never prop a bottle for a baby – always hold babies when feeding them a bottle.**

**Be prepared -- be certified in Infant and Child CPR/Choking techniques and review them often.**

*Leading the Way for Child Care in North Dakota*

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Eastern North Dakota 800-941-7003 or 218-299-7026 ~ Western North Dakota 888-223-1510 or 701-223-1510

[www.ndchildcare.org](http://www.ndchildcare.org)