



PREVENTING CHILDHOOD AIRWAY OBSTRUCTION INJURIES

Because most infant suffocation occurs in the sleeping environment, infants should sleep only in properly equipped cribs. They should never sleep on couches, chairs, regular beds or other soft surfaces.

- Place an infant on his or her back on a firm, flat crib mattress in a crib with a JPMA label indicating that it meets national safety standards. The mattress should be covered with a fitted sheet.
- Remove pillows, comforters, stuffed toys and other soft products from the crib.
- Use a sleep sack or swaddle to keep the child warm, or tuck in a light blanket that goes no higher than the chest.

To avoid choking, always supervise young children while they are eating, and keep small objects that are potential choking hazards out of their reach.

- Do not allow children under age 3 to eat small, round or hard foods, including hot dogs, hard candy, nuts, grapes and popcorn.
- Get on the floor on your hands and knees, so that you are at your child's eye level. Look for and remove small items such as jewelry, coins, buttons, pins, nails and stones. Be sure to keep all plastic bags out of reach.

Keep cords and strings that could be strangulation hazards (those that are 7 inches or longer) away from children.

- Never hang anything on or above a crib with string or ribbon longer than 7 inches.
- Never put a long cord like a necklace, ribbon or bib with ties on an infant.
- Clip pacifiers to clothing with short leashes, not long cords.
- Remove hood and neck drawstrings from all children's clothing.

- Remove hood and neck drawstrings from all children's outerwear. Never allow children to wear helmets, necklaces, purses, scarves or clothing with drawstrings while on playgrounds.
- Tie up all window blind and drapery cords, or cut the ends and retrofit with safety tassels. The inner cords of blinds should be fitted with cord stops.
- Don't use toys with cords longer than 7 inches.

Make sure toys and other items children play with do not pose choking or suffocation hazards.

- Ensure that children play with age-appropriate toys, as indicated by choking hazard safety labels. Inspect old and new toys regularly for damage that may cause small pieces to break off. Consider purchasing a small parts tester to determine whether toys and objects in your home may present a choking hazard to young children.
- Make sure toy chests have no lids or have safety hinges. Do not permit children access to household appliances where they could become trapped, such as refrigerators or dryers.
- Don't let children under age 8 blow up balloons. Use Mylar balloons instead of latex balloons. If you must use latex balloons, store them out of reach of children, and deflate and discard balloons and balloon pieces after use.

Sleeping environment safety remains important for children up to age 8.

- Children under age 8 should not be allowed to sleep on the top bunk of a bunk bed. Ensure that all spaces between the guardrail and bed frame, and all spaces in the head and foot boards, are less than 3.5 inches.

Learn CPR for infants and children and the Heimlich maneuver for choking.

