

# CHOKING HAZARDS

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Children under 4 years old, should not be served foods that are round, hard, small, thick and sticky, smooth or slippery.

## Examples of Choking Hazards:

- Hard raw vegetables and fruits  
(ie: carrot sticks or apple slices with peelings)

- Hot dogs or sausage sliced into rounds

- White grapes

- Uncooked dried fruit

- Hard candy

- Whole nuts, beans, seeds or grain kernels

- Pretzels, chips peanuts, and popcorn

- Marshmallows

- Spoonfuls of peanut butter

- Chewing gum



### Guideline for preparation:

Infants—cut foods into pieces no larger than 1/4 inch cube

Toddlers up to age 4—cut foods into pieces no larger than 1/2 inch cube

Source: Caring for Our Children National Health and Safety Performance Standards:  
Guidelines for Out-of-Home Child Care (2nd Edition)

National Resource Center for Health & Safety in Child Care (2002)

Additional Resource: Center for Disease Control and Prevention—National Center for Injury Prevention and Control: <http://www.cdc.gov>

## CHOKING HAZARDS

Children are more susceptible to choking than adults. Over 500 deaths occur each year in the United States due to choking and most of these people who die are children. Make sure you do all you can to protect the children in your care.

1. *To Avoid Choking Hazards...*  
Adults should eat with children.
  - Model taking small bites and chewing thoroughly
  - Use preventive teaching to the children
  - Serve food that is safe for children to chew and swallow
  
2. *To Avoid Choking Hazards...*
  - Encourage small bites
  - Encourage chewing completely
  - Insist on children sitting
  - Cut foods into small pieces (less than  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch)
  
3. *Careful: Choking Hazard!*  
Avoid presenting food to children that is round and firm, sticky, or cut into large chunks. Food should be no larger than  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch in diameter for preschoolers and  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch for toddlers.
  
4. *Careful: Avoid These Foods*
  - Nuts and Seeds
  - Whole berries
  - Raw carrots and celery
  - Grapes, unless they have been cut in half
  - Hot dogs
  - Large chunks of meat or cheese
  - Popcorn
  - Hard candy
  - Chunks of peanut butter