

April –June 2017 Themed Child Safety Campaign **CHOKING** **PRACTITIONER INFORMATION**

Nationally choking is one of the main causes of accidental death for the under 5s and remains a [Public Health England accident prevention priority](#).

Food is a common cause of choking. Whilst babies and young children are learning how to chew, swallow and breathe in the right order they can sometimes get the actions mixed up, causing choking. Also as babies and young children explore their environment by putting things into their mouths this makes coins, small objects and toys high on the list of choking hazards.

Links with child development

Due to babies and toddlers being smaller – in height, weight and inside! Their windpipes are narrower and still growing. This means anything smaller than a 2p coin could be dangerous to a child under 3yrs.

Once a baby has learnt the skill of picking things up, their instinct is to put the object in their mouth. However, if a baby starts to choke they won't be able to push or pull the obstruction away.

It's a common misconception that choking causes coughing and spluttering. Like drowning, it is likely to be completely silent with no sound to warn that something is wrong.

Parents need to be prepared for when baby's reaching and grabbing skills develop and aware that toddlers continue to explore taste and texture by placing things in their mouths.

Local scale and nature of the problem

From April 2016 and March 2017 across Northumberland **over 60** (0-4yr olds) attended A&E departments due to choking. These choking episodes commonly involved coins, food, jewellery and toy parts.

The location of episodes was highest in child's own home followed by external environments e.g. restaurants.

Attendances by age were similar for all groups 0-4yrs 11mths.

Attendances by gender were exactly equal.

Outcomes: 79% home discharged, 11% transferred to other hospital, 3% returned to clinic/out-patient departments.

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Information to share with parents

- Keep small objects out of reach of babies and toddlers
- Always stay with a baby when bottle-feeding
- Always stay with a baby or child when they are eating or drinking
- Sit with toddlers while they eat to ensure that they are calm and sit still
- Avoid round or oval shaped food, cut into sticks
- Do not give peanuts to children under six
- When babies start rolling, shuffling and crawling, check the floor area for small or sharp objects for example buttons or safety pins.
- Have a container for putting spare change or small things in and keep it out of sight and reach.
- Vacuum the floor regularly.
- Choose age appropriate toys displaying Lion Mark and CE logo.
- Store handbags, changing bags, clothes with pockets high up out of reach
- Teach older siblings not to give small objects to babies and toddlers.
- Siblings feeding babies unsupervised is not recommended.

Resources for promoting key messages

CAPT Preventing Accident session plans and Accident and Child Development practitioner guides are useful for planning information displays and activities. Both can be purchased directly from CAPT or on request for free loan to loan from the Accident Prevention Team (see details below)



View cards 3 & 10



Handbag/changing bags/coat pockets are where numerous choking hazards can hide.

Activity: Where are handbags/changing bags/coats kept? Ask group to write down/draw on a post-it where they normally leave these items. Discuss whether these locations are easily

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accessible to a crawling baby or toddler. Examples of accessible locations may be: hall table, kitchen work surface, chair/chair back, bannister, bed, floor – inaccessible locations may include: hanging on high coat hook, on high shelf, on top of wardrobe, in lockable cupboard.

‘The Chokeables’ - St John Ambulance made this short video to show what to do if a baby is choking. Access at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/stjohnambulance>

This site includes a range of short videos on how to cope with a choking baby, older child and children’s CPR.

Choking Doll (Order number TP03/11/01) – can be used to demonstrate how to remove a choke quickly and successfully in a baby. Request a free loan from Health Improvement Resource Service Access: www.northumbria.nhs.uk/resources or email:

himpresources@nhct.nhs.uk



Choking Tubes – make parents aware of the diameter of a young child’s throat. If something fits completely into the cylinder it is a choking danger to children under 3yrs.

Request a free loan from Janette Wood (details below) or available to purchase from Kid Rapt.

Please submit parent and staff feedback to Janette Wood by Friday 14th July

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