

Choking and High Risk Foods

Risk Factors:

The National Safety Council reports that annually nearly 3,000 people in the United States die from choking. A large percentage of those persons are over 65 years of age.

Choking and aspiration are common problems in persons with developmental disabilities. A number of factors increase an individual's risk of choking, including:

- Neurological and muscular disorders such as cerebral palsy and seizure disorders
- Few or no teeth
- Chewing inadequately
- Eating too rapidly
- Putting too large a portion in one's mouth
- Talking or being distracted while eating
- Side effects from medications
- Poor posture while eating
- Pica
- Gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)
- Difficulty swallowing

High Risk Foods:

In addition to these identified factors that increase the risk of choking, the most common foods identified as "high risk" for choking include:

- Hotdogs
- Grapes
- Peanut butter
- Peanut butter sandwiches on soft bread
- Dry crumbly foods such as cornbread or rice served without butter, jelly, sauce, etc.
- Dry meats such as ground beef served without sauce, gravy
- Whole, raw vegetables served in large bite sized pieces
- Whole hard fruits like apples or pears
- Candy with large nuts
- Hard nuts

References:

<http://www.state.tn.us/mental/publications/HotSpotJuly2002.pdf>

<http://www.nsc.org/safetyagenda/Graphics/home2.jpg>

References: Title 77: Public Health Part 350 Chapter 1: Section 350.3030;

<http://www.dmr.state.ma.us/PDF/QMwellnessIIWinter.pdf>

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