



'Keeping Children Safe' newsletter – JANUARY 2020

Supporting anyone working with families in East Sussex to help prevent child accidents

Help keep your little ones safe from choking

Every day around 40 under 5's in the UK are taken to hospital as a result of choking or swallowing something they shouldn't. Whilst it is often a common misconception that a choking baby or child will cough and splutter, choking can be completely silent, with no warning sign that something might be wrong.

It may sound obvious, but we can easily forget that children are not mini versions of adults, and that these differences can put them at risk. For example, babies and young children haven't learnt how to chew, swallow and breathe in the right order. They can sometimes get these mixed up, and this can cause choking. What's more, at this age, their windpipes are narrower and still growing, meaning that many small pieces of food which may seem okay to us – such as a whole grape, a jelly cube, marshmallow or piece of hot dog – can potentially be dangerous to them.



The Child Accident Prevention Trust offers the following helpful advice...

- Always ensure that small, round items, such as grapes and cherry tomatoes are cut in half lengthways (and ideally into quarters), and that food such as vegetables and hot dog sausages are cut into narrow batons, not balls.
- As babies do not have the strength to push their bottle away if they start to choke, never prop up a babies' bottle or leave them alone whilst feeding.
- Babies will often have an instinct to put things in their mouths, which can be a challenge for parents/carers. Always keep small objects such as coins, pen lids, button batteries and small toy parts out of reach of babies and toddlers.
- Toddlers like to wiggle around and can get easily distracted when eating. Try to stay within arm's length of your small child when they are eating and encourage them to sit still and concentrate. If they're walking or running around with food in their mouths, they are at risk of choking.
- Seek medical advice immediately if you suspect your child has swallowed something dangerous (for example a button battery).

For more information on choking prevention advice, visit www.capt.org.uk/choking-prevention

DID YOU KNOW? As part of their 'Chokeables' campaign, the St John Ambulance surveyed over 4,000 parents and found that 40% of them had seen their baby choke. When quizzed on first aid, they found that almost four-fifths didn't know what to do in this situation.

The NHS offers useful advice on how to help a child that is choking...

- If you can see what they are choking on, try to remove it.
- However don't poke blindly or repeatedly with your fingers as this could make things worse by pushing the object further and making it harder to remove.
- If they are coughing, encourage them to continue to help bring up what they are choking on and do not leave them alone.
- If they are still conscious, but either not coughing or their coughing isn't effective, use back blows.

For more information on what to do if your child is choking visit [here](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/choking/).

Or why not watch the memorable 'Chokeables' video produced by St John Ambulance.



www.sja.org.uk/press-centre/campaigns/baby-choking-the-chokeables

Helpful resource for families: [The Pen That Lost His Lid](https://www.stjohnambulance.org.uk/press-centre/campaigns/the-pen-that-lost-his-lid). This ebook, by St John Ambulance aims to help children and parents learn first aid together. Pen goes on an epic journey in search of his beloved lid, making lots of new friends along the way. Will Pen ever find his lid? Will you discover how to help a choking baby? Find out in [here](https://www.stjohnambulance.org.uk/press-centre/campaigns/the-pen-that-lost-his-lid).