

CHOKING FOODS

POLICY: Children will be served foods that are safe as well as nutritious.

PURPOSE: To avoid the possibility of children choking.
To serve as a role model for families.

PROCEDURE:

1. Children will be closely supervised by an adult seated at the table with them.
2. At mealtime, children will sit upright at the table. Children will eat slowly and take small bites.
3. Foods will be altered in order to make them safe before serving.
4. Cut food into small pieces no larger than **half an inch** or into thin slices.
 - a. Cut round or tube shaped food into spears rather than circles / round pieces.
 - b. Take small bones out of meat and fish.
 - c. Take seeds and pits out of fruit.
 - d. Cook or steam hard food (e.g. carrots) until it is soft enough to smash with a fork or squish with your fingers.
5. Children will **not** be served foods that are known to cause choking such as:
 - a. Small, firm, slippery foods that can slide down the throat before chewing
 - hard candy
 - peanuts
 - grapes
 - b. Small, dry, or hard foods that are difficult to chew and are easy to swallow whole
 - popcorn
 - pretzels

- nuts and seeds
 - potato and corn chips
 - raw vegetables (carrots, etc) and some hard fruits (cantaloupe, etc)
 - ice cubes
- c. Sticky or tough foods that do not break apart easily and are hard to remove from the throat
- hot dogs cut into circles or served whole
 - cheese cubes, blocks, or string cheese
 - spoonful of peanut butter (spread on cracker is OK)
 - tough meat
 - raisins and other dried fruit
 - chewing gum
 - gummy fruit snacks
 - marshmallows
6. Infant bottles shall never be propped up. Cereal shall never be added to infant bottles.
7. Remind children to swallow before talking or laughing.
8. Model safe behavior for children to follow, including eating slowly, taking small bites, and chewing food completely before swallowing.
9. Encourage older children to serve as role models for younger children. All children should avoid playing games with food, as that may lead to an increased risk of choking.
10. See section L-3.