



Community Health Connections

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Fact Sheet

Choking Prevention

Safety always comes first—know each person's most current needs and habits.

The best way to ensure safety is to SUPERVISE!!!

When eating (or being fed), it is important to encourage the person to chew food thoroughly, keep the head in the forward position and have swallowed the first bite before taking the next bite.

What must you do?

- Provide **supervision** when the person is eating, drinking, or receiving medicine.
- Have a doctor's order if medication is to be crushed and/or given in food.
- Follow State recommendations and your agency's policies regarding:
 - Administering medication in food (never in peanut butter or cheese)
 - Crushing medications
- **Before feeding make sure you know the person, his/her needs and his/her habits.**
 - If you don't know the individual find the appropriate information and get clarification.
 - When there are known feeding or swallowing difficulties, always be sure that you are following the most current plan.
 - Know the individual's proper eating position.
 - Know the individual's proper food texture and thickening of liquid.

Several examples of foods known to cause choking:

Peanut butter	✓ Hot dogs and sausage
Popcorn	✓ Candy (any size and consistency)
Chunks of cheese and meat	✓ Nuts
Hard fruit and vegetables	✓ Marshmallows
Chips—potato, corn, or tortilla	✓ Grapes
Bread	

Be responsible—**observe** for any item that could potentially put someone who is in your care at risk of severe injury or even death.

- Check the area (especially the kitchen) each time you leave it. Be aware if food is left where the person will have access to it.
- Always *be aware* of each persons ISP and all their needs so you are able to provide for their health and safety.

Close supervision should always be provided to people who have been identified with behaviors characterized as food stuffing and food pocketing. This makes them at higher risk for choking.