

# Safety Fact Sheet



The Utah Safety Council cares about your safety outside of the work setting. We offer resources that keep you and your loved ones safe at home, at play and on the go.

## CHOKING PREVENTION TIPS

Did you know that around 4,700 people die each year as a result of choking? Would you be able to recognize if a family member or friend started to choke? Do you know what activities might lead to choking?

*Source: National Safety Council Injury Facts Publication, 2015 Edition*

### Here are some common causes of choking:

- Trying to swallow large pieces of poorly chewed food
- Drinking alcohol before or during meals; alcohol dulls the nerves that aid in swallowing
- Wearing dentures; dentures make it difficult to sense whether food is fully chewed before it is swallowed
- Eating while talking excitedly or laughing
- Eating too fast
- Walking, playing, or running with food or objects in the mouth

### Follow these safety precautions to help prevent children from choking:

- Don't leave small objects, such as buttons, coins and beads within an infant's reach
- Have children sit in a high chair or at a table while they eat
- Do not let children eat too fast
- Give infants soft food that they do not need to chew
- Make sure that toys are too large to be swallowed
- Do not give infants and young children foods like nuts, grapes, popcorn or raw vegetables
- Make sure that toys have no small parts that could be pulled off
- Cut foods a child can choke on easily such as hot dogs, into small pieces
- Supervise children while they eat
- Never leave a baby to drink their bottle by themselves. They could vomit or inhale the milk and choke.
- Babies should not be given any food they cannot chew properly. Large chunks are easily breathed in.
- When preparing food, remove small bones, for example from fish or chicken.
- Don't allow your children to eat anything while lying down.
- Avoid giving children dried peas and beans to play with.
- Teach older children not to give hard biscuits, crackers or candy to a young baby or toddler.
- Foods that may partially or completely block the windpipe include raw carrots and celery, peas, nuts, sunflower seeds, cherries with pits, watermelon with seed, popcorn and hard candy.
- Such foods as hot dogs, sausages and grapes can also cause choking because they are the right shape for blocking a child's windpipe. However, these foods can be served if they are chopped into small pieces.
- Peanut butter and chewing gum can also cause choking.