

# KERN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE



## Choking and Strangulation Prevention Tips

### For Infants and Toddlers



Home - It's where children grow and learn; the place where they find comfort, love, and care. It's where they touch, explore, and experience the world around them. It is also a place where children should be safe.

Unfortunately, home injuries are the leading source of accidental death for children. Almost 21 million medical visits and 20,000 deaths each year are the result of accidents in the home. Home injuries are largely avoidable through education and prevention. Parents can take proactive steps to childproof their home and keep their children safe by teaching them a few practical rules.

#### Make Meals Fun and Safe

- Cut food for toddlers into tiny pieces. Children under 5 should not eat small, round, or hard foods, including pieces of hot dog, cheese sticks, hard candy, nuts, grapes, marshmallows, or popcorn.
- Remember, have young kids eat in a high chair or at the table, not while lying down or playing. Supervise your baby when he or she is eating.

#### Keep Small Objects Out of Reach

- See the world from a child's perspective. Get on the floor on your hands and knees so that you are at your child's eye level. Look for and remove small items.
- Keep small objects such as buttons, beads, jewelry, pins, nails, marbles, coins, stones, and tacks out of reach and sight.



*Among children treated in emergency rooms for non-fatal choking incidents, almost 60 percent were food related. Overall, 13 percent of cases involved swallowing coins, and 19 percent involved candy or gum.*

#### Window Cord Safety

Children and window cords do not mix. When window cords are accessible to children they can become strangulation hazards.

- Move all cribs, beds, furniture, and toys away from windows and window cords, preferably to another wall.
- Keep all window cords well out of the reach of children.
- Eliminate any dangling cords.
- Make sure that tasseled cords are as short as possible.
- Check that cord stops are properly installed and adjusted to limit the movement of inner lift cords.
- Continuous loop cords on draperies and vertical blinds should be permanently anchored to the floor and wall.
- Free retrofit kits can be ordered from the Window Safety Council at [www.windowcoverings.org](http://www.windowcoverings.org)

#### Be On the Lookout for Magnets

- Keep small magnets away from children. These include magnets found in construction sets, children's toys or stress relieving desk toys, refrigerator magnets, and Buckyballs.
- Inspect games or toys that include magnets. Inspect children's play areas regularly for missing or dislodged magnets.
- Seek medical attention immediately if you suspect that magnets have been swallowed. Look for abdominal symptoms such as pain, nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.