

Food-related choking in young children

Reduce the risk of food-related choking in babies and young children

Young children can choke on food quite easily. This is because they have small air and food passages, they're still learning to move food around in their mouths, and their biting, chewing and food-grinding skills are still developing. To minimise the risk of young children choking always make sure:

- they sit down while they eat
- an adult is with them while they're eating or drinking
- to offer food that matches their chewing and grinding abilities.

How to alter high risk foods and lower choking risk

Small hard foods

- ✓ Grate, spiralise, thinly slice or cook soft and cut into strips.



Thinly sliced celery



Grated carrot

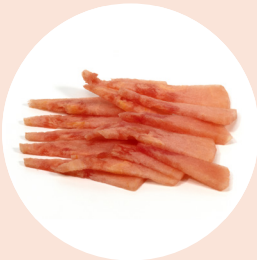


Cooked apple pieces

Watch the YouTube clip: 'Tips on how to prevent your baby or child choking'

Small round or oval foods

- ✓ Remove stones, seeds and pips and quarter or finely chop to 8mm x 8mm (or smaller).



Seedless watermelon



Quartered cherry tomato



Quartered grapes



Squashed cooked peas

Food with skin or leaves

- ✓ Remove skin or finely chop or slice.



Skinless chicken



Finely sliced lettuce

Fruit with skin

- ✓ Remove stone and chop to 8mm x 8mm (or smaller), grate, thinly slice or cook soft and cut into strips.



Grated apple



Soft cooked pear

Compressible food

- ✓ Cook until very tender, mince, shred or chop to 8mm x 8mm.



Shredded chicken



Diced tender beef

Food with bones

- ✓ Remove all bones.



Fish without bones

Thick pastes

- ✓ Spread thinly and evenly.



Peanut butter thinly spread

Fibrous or stringy foods

- ✓ Peel skin and fibres off, slice thinly across grain.



Peeled and sliced orange



Thinly sliced celery



Thinly sliced pineapple



Cooked rhubarb

AVOID



Whole or pieces of nuts



Large seeds



Hard or chewy lollies or sweets



Crisps, chippies and corn chips



Hard rice crackers



Dried fruit



Sausages, saveloys and cherrios



Popcorn



Marshmallows

Children can choke on food at any age but the risk is higher in children under 5 years. Refer to the Ministry of Health Guidelines to find out more. Search 'food and choking' at health.govt.nz