



Choking and Strangulation Prevention



The majority of childhood suffocations, strangulations, and chokings occur in the home. As with most unintentional injuries and deaths, choking and strangulation incidents can be avoided by taking simple preventive measures.

TIPS

- ✓ Strangulation and suffocation may occur in cribs that have older, unsafe designs. Before using a crib, look for a Juvenile Products Manufacturers Association certification seal indicating that the crib meets current safety standards.
- ✓ Ensure the crib has no missing, improperly placed, loose or broken hardware. Check the spacing between crib slats to ensure that the baby's body cannot slide through openings. Crib slats should be no more than 2 and 3/8 inches apart (about the width of a soda can). Old cribs with missing slats pose a significant hazard.
- ✓ Only use tight-fitting mattresses and mattress covers so the baby cannot become wedged between the mattress and the side of the crib or become entangled in the sheet.
- ✓ Children can strangle on window blind cords. It is important to make sure that all window blind cords are out of the reach of a child, and furniture is moved so a child is unable to reach the blind cord.
- ✓ Inspect the packaging of toys before purchasing them. Only allow children to play with toys that are labeled for their age level. Inspect old and new toys regularly for damage and loose or missing parts.
- ✓ Half of all toy-related deaths involve children choking on balloon pieces. Keep balloons out of the reach of children under 8 years old.
- ✓ Remove drawstrings from children's clothing. The strings can become entangled with playground equipment, bus doors, or cribs. Completely remove the hood and neck strings from all children's outerwear, including jackets and sweatshirts, up to size 12.
- ✓ Do not allow children to wear bicycle helmets on playgrounds. They pose a strangulation hazard for children because they can become stuck in openings on playground equipment. Also, to prevent strangulation, never allow children to wear necklaces, purses, scarves, or clothing with drawstrings on playgrounds.
- ✓ Learn First Aid and CPR.

911 If you or someone you know is experiencing a life threatening injury or act of violence, please dial 911 immediately.

If you would like more information on injury and violence prevention education and information, call 1-800-732-8333 or email ivp@vdh.virginia.gov