

Choking Prevention Guide



Source: [tinyhearts.com](https://www.tinyhearts.com)

High-Risk Food Characteristics

There are characteristics that make foods more likely for babies and children to choke on them. These food characteristics are:



Small



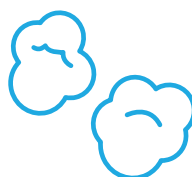
Round



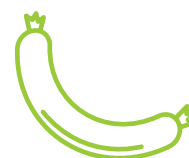
Hard



Slippery



Challenging to Chew



Size of an Airway

Small and Slippery - means the food is more likely to enter and block the airway

Round and Hard - means the food is more likely to cause a complete blockage of the airway

The more small, round, hard, slippery, or challenging a food is, the greater the risk of choking it poses. They are more likely to enter and get lodged in the airway. It is important to also note that your little one can choke on anything, including liquid.

An example of food that fits all of the small, round, hard and slippery criteria is a grape or a cherry tomato.

How Small is a Child's Airway?



1-6 Months
5-6mm diameter



6-18 Months
6-7mm diameter



18 Months - 3 Years
7-8 mm diameter



3 Years +
8-9mm diameter

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High-Risk Foods



Marshmallows

Your average marshmallow's size is very similar to that of a little one's [aged 0-3] airway. When mixed with saliva they become sticky - which can be hard for children to swallow and can prevent choking treatment from being effective.



Chewing Gum, Lollipops & Gum Balls



Grapes & Cherry Tomatoes

These are the perfect size to block an airway. Chop them into quarters lengthways or in half for older kids.



Circular Shaped Foods

Unchopped sausages + hotdogs or chopped into coin-like shapes can easily block an airway. Instead, chop in long, thin slices.



Nuts

Did you know that little ones can choke on even half a nut? Instead, grind them down or use a thin spread of nut paste like peanut butter. Avoid whole nuts until at least 5.



Oranges or Citrus with Membranes



Chunks of Meat

Cook, freeze, and grate into small pieces or chop well.



Large Blueberries

Halve or quarter for extra-large ones.



Watermelon

Chop into long, thin slices.



Hard, Raw Fruit & Vegetables

Peel + grate, steam, blend or chop well.



Ice



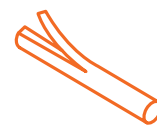
Rice Cakes



Peas



Fish with Bones



String Cheese, Cheese Sticks or cubed cheese



Raisins, Sultanas & Currants



Popcorn

Popcorn is a big choking risk, but also poses a risk for aspiration [being breathed into the lungs].



Tiny Teddies



Canned Fruit

Make These Foods Safer



Hard, Raw, Fruit or Vegetables -
Cook or Grate



Grapes & Cherry Tomatoes -
Cut Into Quarters, Lengthways



Sausages & Hot Dogs -
Cut Into Long Thin Slices



Whole Nuts -
Grind or Use a Thin Spread of Paste on Bread