

Healthy Beginnings:

A Guide To Prenatal And Early Childhood Nutrition - Prevent Choking Hazards

Session 3



Safe Eating Habits

As a parent of young children, it's always good to know how to avoid potential choking hazards during mealtime. Follow these tips on how to change your child's food and behaviors to help make mealtime safer.

Modify Foods to Avoid Choking

- Cut foods into smaller pieces – no larger than ½ inch
- Avoid foods that are larger than a nickel
- Cut foods into thin slices or strips
- Avoid round pieces

Cooking Tips

- Steam foods – tender enough to easily pierce with a fork
- Mash or puree foods
- Remove any seeds, pits, and skin from fruits/vegetables
- Remove any bones
- Give squishable foods
 - Cooked cereal
 - Soft vegetables
 - Bananas

Helpful Behaviors

- Allow plenty of time for meals and snacks
- Encourage children to chew foods slowly and thoroughly before swallowing
- Have children sit upright while eating
- Do not allow children to walk or run while eating
- Always stay present in the room with children; choking can be a silent event
- Model safe eating behaviors like eating small portions and taking only one bite at a time

Foods to Avoid - Choking Hazards

- Marshmallows
- Ice cubes
- Hard candy
- Spoonful of nuts/seed butter
- Gummy fruit snacks

Starting good eating habits early will help your children develop healthier and safer ways to enjoy food.



0.835 in



½ in

Source: U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. (2019, April). *Infant nutrition and feeding: A guide for use in the special supplemental nutrition program for women, infants, and children (WIC)*. <https://wicworks.fns.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/document/infant-feeding-guide.pdf>

