

Gagging and Choking

Your baby will gag and spit out food while learning to swallow, especially when trying lumpier or thicker foods. Gagging is a protective reflex which lessens as your infant gets more proficient at eating. Choking, however, is much more serious and occurs when food gets stuck in the baby's windpipe.

Foods That Can Cause Choking	How To Make These Foods Safer
Sticky Spreads: Peanut butter, tahini, and almond butter	Spread thinly on whole grain breads or crackers. Don't give spoonfuls of these foods.
Hard Foods: Some raw vegetables and fruit	Cook hard foods to soften them. Grate foods into smaller pieces.
Round, Smooth Foods: Grapes and cherries	Cut each one into 4 small sections. Remove seeds or pits.
Tube-Shaped Foods: Cooked baby carrots, hot dogs	Cut foods lengthwise into strips. Cut the strips into small pieces.
Stringy Or Chewy Foods: Meat, long thin pasta, and melted cheese	Cut these foods into small pieces.

Caution

The following foods can cause choking and are NEVER safe for babies:

- Nuts,
- Popcorn
- Hard candies, cough drops
- Gum
- Snacks using toothpicks or skewers
- Whole grapes
- Raisins and corn kernels
- Carrots cut into rounds
- Hot dogs
- Fish with bones

Do you and all who care for your baby (grandparents, babysitters...) know how to manage a choking baby? For a 20 minutes refresher on CPR available for purchase, go to www.cpranytime.org.

Some material used in this handout is from Loving Care, published by the Nova Scotia health department. See novascotia.ca/dhw/lovingcare/