



## Who Is At Risk?

- Children ages 4 and under, especially under age 1, are at greatest risk for all forms of airway obstruction injury.
- Male, low-income and non-white children are at increased risk from suffocation, choking and strangulation.
- Children placed in adult beds are at increased risk for airway obstruction injury.
- Since 1990, at least 209 children ages 2 and under have died in adult beds from smothering as a result of being laid on by another person.
- 296 children in this age group died in adult beds as a result of entrapment in the bed structure.



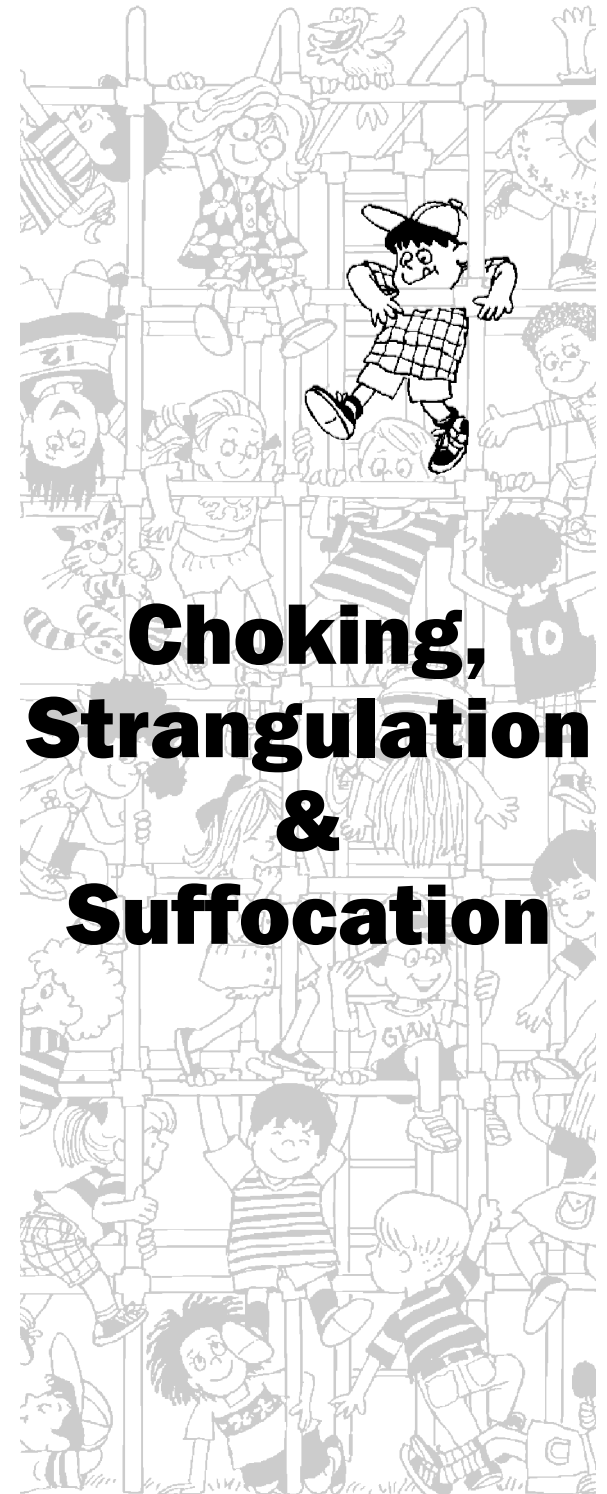
For more information contact:

**Safe Kids Grand Forks**  
c/o Altru Health System  
P.O. Box 6002  
Grand Forks, ND 58206-6002

Coordinator: Carma Hanson  
Phone: 701-780-1489  
Fax: 701-780-1507  
Email: [chanson@altru.org](mailto:chanson@altru.org)  
[www.altru.org](http://www.altru.org)



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## Airway Obstruction Injury

- **Airway Obstruction Injury** - Suffocation, choking, aspiration & strangulation are the leading causes of unintentional injury-related death among infants under age 1.
- **Aspiration** - Child inhales and causes an object to be sucked into the windpipe or lungs.
- **Choking** - Objects block their internal airway.
- **Suffocation** - Materials block or cover their nose and mouth.
- **Strangulation** - Items become wrapped around their necks and interfere with breathing.
- Children under 3 are especially vulnerable due to their small airway, inexperience with chewing and their natural tendency to put things in their mouth.

## The Facts Are In

- In 2002, 885 children ages 14 and under died from accidental airway obstruction injuries. Of these children, 88 percent were ages 4 and under.
- In 2002, 168 children ages 14 and under died from choking. Forty-two percent choked on food, and 58 percent choked on other items.
- In 2003, nearly 18,000 children were treated in hospital emergency departments in 2002 for airway obstruction injuries.
- Eighty-eight percent of deaths and nearly 80 percent of hospital emergency room visits for airway obstruction injuries were among children ages 4 and under.

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- Since 1990, at least 57 children, nearly all ages 3 and under, have died due to entrapment in bunk beds.

## Did You Know?

- The majority of childhood choking, strangulations and suffocations occur at home.
- 60% of infant suffocation occurs in the sleeping environment.
- Infants can suffocate when:
  - a. Their faces become wedged or buried in a mattress or soft cushion.
  - b. When someone in the same bed rolls over onto them.
  - c. Their mouths or noses are covered by or pressed against a plastic bag.
- Annually, cribs and play yards are involved in over 53% of all nursery product-related deaths among children age 5 and under.
- Cribs are responsible for about 26 strangulation and suffocation deaths each year (primarily older, used cribs).
- Children are at risk for choking on small round foods such as hot dogs, candies, nuts, grapes, carrots, and popcorn.
- Nonfood items tend to be round or conforming objects, including coins, small balls, and balloons.
- Balloons are the most common cause of toy-related choking deaths of children.
- Unlike other causes of choking death, balloon-related deaths are as common among children ages 3 and older as younger children.
- Strangulation occurs when items (clothing, drawstrings, ribbons or other

decorations, pacifier strings, and window blind and drapery cords) become wrapped around their necks.

- Children strangle in openings big enough for parts of their bodies but too small for their heads. These include spaces in bunk beds, cribs, playground equipment, baby strollers, carriages and high chairs.

## Steps To Safety

- Place infants on their backs on a firm, crib mattress in a crib that meets national safety standards.
  - Remove pillows, comforters, toys, and other soft products from the crib.
  - Always supervise young children while they are eating or playing.
  - Do not allow children under 6 to eat round or hard foods including hot dogs.
  - Remove hood and neck drawstrings from all children's outerwear.
  - Never allow children to wear necklaces, purses, scarves or clothing with drawstrings while on playgrounds.
  - Tie up all window blinds and drapery cords or cut the ends and fix with safety tassels.
  - Never hang anything on or above a crib with string or ribbon longer than seven inches.
  - Never tie a pacifier or teether around a baby's neck.
  - Learn how to give first aid to a child who chokes or stops breathing.
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