

Children's Emergency Department (CHED)

Choking Child Discharge Information Leaflet

Your child has been seen in the Emergency Department and the clinician has assessed that they may be safely discharged home.

This leaflet is to advise you about how to manage your child's diagnosis and to help you decide where and when to get further advice or assessment if needed.

Choking in Children

Choking on an object at any age can be a stressful and concerning time for anyone. Choking occurs when an object gets stuck within the upper airway. Choking is a natural instinctive response the body takes to try to expel the object, to clear the airway.

Now I am home, will my child be okay around food? How can I avoid this happening again?

It is important to remember that your child may be upset and distressed from having experienced a choking event. Some children may show fear around eating or starting to avoid certain foods altogether. It is important not to try and push them to eat as this may make the avoidance behaviour worse. Instead encourage them to take smaller bites or mouthfuls, serving softer foods (for example cooking vegetables more to make them softer) and avoiding classic foods that children can choke on (such as hot dogs, grapes, raw carrots, nuts, raisins, hard or gummy candy, spoonfuls of peanut butter, chunks of meat or cheese, and popcorn) for a few days.

Sometimes the object that got stuck can damage the back of the throat and your child may complain of a sore throat. This may last for a few days and simple pain relief like paracetamol can be given to help with this.

Remember! It is important to only keep age-appropriate toys around children. Some household items when small enough may pose a choking risk with smaller children.

What should I do if my child chokes again?

If your child is conscious but is starting to turn blue or making a noise when breathing:

- Call 999 immediately and call for help if other people are around.
- If you are trained to do so, give 'back blows and abdominal thrusts', or ask if others are trained around you. If you are not trained, then you may be advised by the 999 call handler.

If your child stops breathing and is unconscious following choking:

- This situation requires resuscitation, if you are trained to do so, or follow the instructions from the professional who answers your 999 call.

If your child is coughing but can talk/breathe – it is likely that they have not completely blocked their airway:

- In this instance stay with the child and try to keep them calm, encourage them to cough and watch them carefully to ensure they recover completely
- Do not try to reach into their mouth and remove any object.
- It is likely that they will be able to clear the object by themselves and will not require any help.

What should I look for in my child after being discharged back home?

Please bring them back to the Emergency Department immediately if your child:

- develops noisy or abnormal breathing
- has a persistent cough
- has ongoing throat pain that is preventing your child from eating

We aim to provide the best care for every patient. So, we would like your feedback on the quality of the care you have received from the Hospital. Please visit <http://ratenhs.uk/IQu9vx> or scan QR code:

