

Suffocation death rates among infants younger than 1 year old have dramatically increased in the last decade ([Gilchrist, Ballesteros, and Parker, 2012](#)). Suffocation deaths usually occur in this age-group by wedging between a wall and mattress or crib side or collapse of a play yard wall ([Theurer and Bhavsar, 2013](#)).

Usually by 1 year old, children chew well, but they may have difficulty with large pieces of food, such as meat and whole hot dogs, and with hard foods, such as nuts. Young children cannot discard pits from fruit or bones from fish. Gel snacks that are sealed in plastic wrappers can be difficult to manage, and the plastic wrapper can be aspirated. Therefore, parents must implement the same precautions as discussed for infants regarding food selection (see [Chapter 9](#)).

Play objects for toddlers must still be chosen with an awareness of danger from small parts. Large, sturdy toys without sharp edges or removable parts are safest. Balloons, coins, paper clips, pins, bells, button batteries, pull-tabs on cans, thumbtacks, nails, screws, jewelry (especially pierced earrings), and all types of pins are common household objects that can cause significant harm if swallowed or aspirated. Because of the danger of aspiration, parents should be taught emergency procedures for choking.

Suffocation from causes seen during infancy is less frequent, but old refrigerators, car trunks, ovens, and other large appliances are an ever-present threat. Toddlers can climb inside these appliances and, if they close the door behind them, can be trapped inside. Removing all doors before discarding or storing old appliances prevents such tragic deaths. Toddlers may also suffocate when toy boxes with heavy, hinged lids accidentally close on their heads or necks. Advise parents of this danger and encourage them to buy storage chests with lightweight, removable covers.

Bodily Harm

Toddlers are still clumsy in many of their skills and can seriously harm themselves when walking while holding a sharp or pointed object or having food or objects (such as spoons) in their mouths. Preventing such occurrences is the best approach with toddlers. The child should be taught that when walking with a pointed object such as a knife or scissors, the pointed end is held away from the face. Dangerous garden or workshop equipment and all firearms