

# Trend watch and “capping off” a choking hazard

✖ New trend spotted at a birthday party: the plastic of water bottles these days is now so thin that kids can bite a tiny hole in the bottom and drink the water as it streams out. Try as we might, although odd appearing, and not very practical, we can't see any health hazard in the practice. However, it does remind us how we've seen kids who do drink from the “proper” side set themselves up for choking by putting the bottle cap into their mouths.

Although the specific stats for choking on bottle caps are hard to come by, the most recent report by the CDC in 2001 showed around 30 percent of choking episodes seen in emergency rooms involved non edible items. Eighteen percent occurred in kids between the ages of five and fourteen. So, it's not only the toddler crowd who puts choke-able items into their mouth. Items the size of a bottle cap are the perfect size to block an airway. Something smaller, like a peanut, may go down into one lung, but not the other. But something the size of a bottle cap, grape, or hot dog piece gets stuck up high enough in the windpipe to block the air passages to both lungs.

Many parents think the Heimlich maneuver (abdominal thrusts) is the only choice for helping a person actively choking. This is not actually the case. In 2006, the American Red Cross revised guidelines to include back-blows for older kids and adults. For a review of first aid for a choking babies you can look into the baby CPR app post.

All of us who ate ice cream cones from the bottom up as a child can understand the appeal of drinking water from the bottom up. But putting bottle caps in the mouth... Yuck.

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