

# Hard sweets and young children

From the sweeties.net wiki

Sweets are a treat, but for babies and toddlers some sweets are a real risk. The NHS says food is the most common thing for babies and toddlers to choke on, and its safety advice names hard sweets directly.

## What the NHS says

- **No hard sweets.** Do not give young children hard foods, such as boiled sweets or whole nuts.
- **Think about size, shape and texture.** Babies can choke on small, sticky or slippery foods.
- **No whole nuts under 5.** Whole nuts should not be given to children under 5 years old, as they can choke on them.
- **Stay with them.** Stay with your child while they eat, and encourage them to sit still, as running around while eating could make them choke.
- **They do not need sugar.** The NHS says babies do not need sugar, and avoiding sugary snacks helps prevent tooth decay: see [sweets and teeth](#)

## Sweets to keep out of reach

Using the NHS advice as a guide, these are worth keeping away from babies and toddlers:

- boiled sweets, humbugs, mint imperials and other hard sweets
- small, round hard sweets such as aniseed balls and gobstoppers
- sweets containing whole nuts
- small, sticky or slippery sweets

Pick and mix bowls at parties and sweet carts at weddings are easy for small hands to reach, so it is worth keeping hard sweets up high when toddlers are about: see [what is a sweet cart?](#)

## Toys and sweets

Sweets with toys inside are treated with caution. In the United States, a 1938 law bans confectionery with a non nutritive object embedded in it, unless the object has a functional value, so Kinder Surprise eggs, with a toy inside the chocolate, are illegal there. The Kinder Joy egg, sold there since 2017, keeps the toy and the chocolate apart. In Europe, in 2000, three families who had lost children to choking on toys from chocolate eggs campaigned for the products to be withdrawn.

## If a child is choking

The NHS first aid steps are:

1. **If they are coughing**, encourage them to keep coughing to bring up what they are choking on, and do not leave them.
2. **If coughing is not working**, shout for help immediately and check whether they are still conscious.
3. **Back blows**. Give up to 5 sharp back blows between the shoulder blades. Lay a baby face down along your thigh or forearm; lay a small child face down on your lap or support them leaning forward.
4. **Thrusts**. For a baby under 1, give up to 5 chest thrusts with 2 fingers in the middle of the chest just below the nipple line. For a child over 1, give up to 5 abdominal thrusts, with your fist between the navel and ribs, pulling sharply inwards and upwards.
5. **Call 999** if the blockage does not come out after back blows and thrusts.

Even if the object comes out, get medical help, because part of it might have been left behind or your child might have been hurt by the procedure.

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