


Children's Health Tip of the Day

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Dangerous Games -- Some Kid-developed Games Can Be Life Threatening

Some of the games children play today are anything but child's play.

Whether they are seeking thrills or doing it on a "dare," some of the games kids play can cause significant injury and even death.

The choking game

It has many names: the choking game, pass-out game, suffocation roulette, space monkey, flat-lining, the dream game... But it all comes down to one dangerous activity.

Using belts, hands, ropes, sheets or plastic bags, children cut off their oxygen supply to the brain in order to achieve a momentary "high" and subsequent "rush" when the oxygen supply is returned. This game can cause brain damage or even death. In fact, it is estimated that 1,000 youngsters each year die while playing this game.

The game is dangerous enough when played in a group setting. But when played alone, the risk is even greater, as there is no one there to release the pressure on the neck when child loses consciousness. The child can suffer permanent brain damage, and even death, within four minutes.

Signs your child might be playing the choking game:

- A suspicious mark on the neck, sometimes hidden by clothing such as turtlenecks, scarves or turned-up collars.
- Any kind of strap, rope or belt lying about near the child without any reason.
- Headaches, sometimes excruciatingly bad ones, loss of concentration, a flushed face.
- Bloodshot eyes or any other noticeable signs of stress on the eyes.
- A thud in the bedroom or against a wall — meaning a fall in cases of solitary practices.

Playing with fire

Another game that can cause serious injury is "fire and ice." Children combine table salt and ice, then and press the combination into the skin. This can cause a frostbite-type burn injury to the skin and leave the skin vulnerable to infection and scarring.

Usually the game is played in groups to see who can get the biggest result. Signs of



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participation are:

- Severe redness on the forearms or thighs, as these are the usual sites chosen for the game.
- Redness and/or burn marks on the skin.
- Blistering of the skin.

If your child has any of these signs, seek medical attention immediately.

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