Foreign Body, Swallowed

Your child swallowed a foreign body. It will probably pass on through the *bowel* (gut) without problems. Sometimes, x-rays are taken to prove a foreign body has been swallowed. This is also done to find the location of the object. Once this object has passed through the *esophagus* (the food tube leading from the mouth to the stomach), it will usually continue through the gut. This is because the esophagus is the narrowest place it must pass.

Even sharp pins, needles, and bones will pass without a problem most of the time. As of now, no further treatment appears to be needed. Give liquids or a soft diet until your child's throat symptoms improve. Sometimes a foreign body in the throat is not seen on the first exam, so call your caregiver if your child is not better in 1-2 days. It will almost always be passed in the stool (bowel movement).

IN THE FUTURE, IF NOT DOING SO ALREADY, FOLLOW SOME OF THESE COMMON GUIDELINES:

- Cut food into small pieces. Tell your child to chew their food well.
- Remove small bones from food.
- Remove large seeds and pits from fruit.
- Keep babies sitting up to eat.
- Throw away small toys.
- Do not allow children to play with balloons.
- **Keep all small batteries away from children. When these are swallowed, they become a medical emergency.** When ingested, these will erode through the gastrointestinal tract within a very short period of time. They can rapidly cause death.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Watch to make sure your child is eating normally.
- Seek medical care if your child develops *abdominal* (belly) pain.
- It is usually unnecessary to re-x-ray to see where a foreign body is located. This is only done if your caregiver feels it is necessary.
- It may take a period of time for the foreign body to exit the body.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your child has trouble breathing, difficulty swallowing, is only able to drink liquids, or has excessive drooling.
- Your child has severe pain and/or persistent coughing.
- Your child develops a fever over 102º F (38.9º C) or as your caregiver recommends.
- Your child develops severe abdominal pain or swelling.
- Your child vomits blood or passes blood with the stool.

It is hard to keep young ones from putting foreign objects in their mouth. If it does happen again, it does not mean you are not doing a good job. Keep trying to do the right things for your child.

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