
The Choking Game -

Staff/Parents Briefing ONLY

The Choking Game - What

- The choking game (also known as the fainting game and a wide variety of local slang names) refers to intentionally cutting off oxygen to the brain with the goal of inducing temporary syncope (fainting) and euphoria.
- There are two distinct methods used to achieve oxygen deprivation: strangulation and self-induced hypocapnia (forced over breathing)



The Choking Game - Why

- Limited research has been conducted regarding motivations for practising the fainting game:
 - Thrill-seeking,
 - Perception that it is a low-risk activity,
 - Peer pressure,
 - Challenge or dare,
 - A rite of passage into a social group,
 - Curiosity in experiencing an altered state of consciousness:
 - the experience of a 'grey out',
 - or an imagined approximation to a near-death experience.
 - A belief that it can induce a brief sense of euphoria (a rushing sensation or high)
 - The prospect of intoxication, albeit brief, at no financial cost.

Strangulation

- A ligature such as a belt or rope around the neck, or hands or arm pressure on the neck compresses the internal carotid artery. Apart from the direct restriction of blood to the brain there are two other significant responses produced by pressing on the neck:
 - Pressing on the carotid arteries also presses on baroreceptors. These bodies then cause vasodilatation (dilation (widening) of the blood vessels) in the brain leading to insufficient blood to perfuse the brain with oxygen and maintain consciousness.
 - A message is also sent via the vagus nerve to the main pacemaker of the heart to decrease the rate and volume of the heartbeat, typically by a third. In some cases there is evidence that this may escalate into asystole (no heart beat), a form of cardiac arrest .
- This method is responsible for most, but not all, of the reported fatalities.
- The method is especially dangerous when practised alone:
 - Involuntary movements can lead to head trauma and other injuries.
 - If standing, loss of consciousness can result in substantial head trauma through falling.
 - In the event that consciousness is not immediately regained, medical help cannot be sought by a third party, observer, or friend.

Self-induced hypocapnea

- The second mechanism requires hyperventilation (forced over-breathing) until symptoms such as tingling, light-headedness or dizziness are felt, followed by a breath-hold.
- This alone is enough to cause a blackout, but it is widely believed that the effect is enhanced if lung air pressure is increased by holding the breath "hard" or "bearing down" (tightening the diaphragm as in a forced exhalation while allowing no air to escape or having an assistant apply a bear-hug
- In some versions the bear-hug is replaced by pressure on the neck in which case blackout is a hybrid of strangulation and self-induced hypocapnea
- The method is especially dangerous when practised alone:
 - Incidental, or indirect, injuries may arise from falling or uncontrolled movements
 - Crushing injury by a ligature or an assistant.
 - Other injuries may include concussion, bone fractures, tongue biting and haemorrhaging of the eyes

The Medical Bit

Hyperventilation leads to an excessive elimination of carbon dioxide (CO₂) with no significant additional amounts of oxygen stored in the body.

As only carbon dioxide is responsible for the breathing stimulus, after hyperventilation, breath can be held longer until cerebral hypoxia occurs. The blood becomes abnormally alkaline as a result of the excessive elimination of carbon dioxide; this subsequent rise in blood pH is termed alkalosis.

Alkalosis interferes with normal oxygen utilization by the brain. The symptoms of alkalosis are neuromuscular irritability, muscular spasms, tingling and numbness of the extremities and around the mouth, and a dizziness, or giddiness, often interpreted as a sense of euphoria.

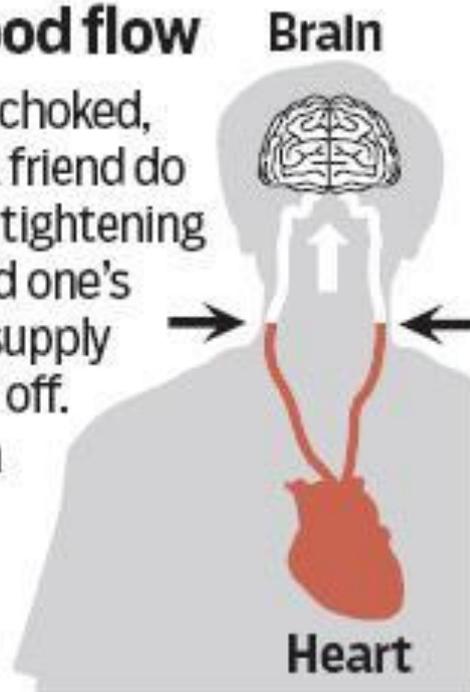
Deadly diversion: The choking game

Staff Only

This is a dangerous practice some children are taking part in that restricts blood flow to the brain to produce a high. The high produced has been labeled a substitute for drugs.

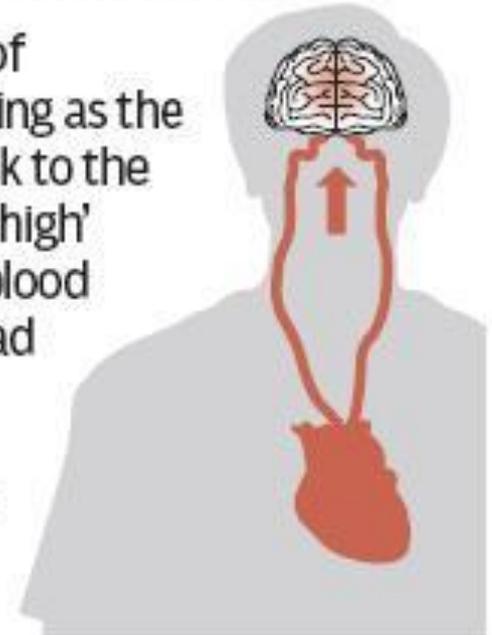
Stopping blood flow

When a person is choked, either by having a friend do the choking or by tightening something around one's own neck, blood supply to the brain is cut off. Blood deprivation kills millions of brain cells permanently.



When choke is released

There is a sense of euphoria or floating as the blood rushes back to the brain. This is the 'high' kids want. That blood surge can also lead to stroke or seizures, severe brain damage or death.



Warning signs

- Bloodshot eyes.
- Frequent, unusual headaches.
- Marks on neck.
- Locked doors.

- Ropes, scarves and belts tied to bedroom furniture, doorknobs or found knotted on the floor.
- Disorientation after spending time alone.

The Choking Game – Next steps

- Add 'key words' to your on-line monitoring software and scan computer use across your setting
- Raise the issue with your pupils – this is happening across all the year groups
- Talk to parents about this topic
- Look out for the warning signs
- 'Intention to harm others' – deal with under disciplinary policy

The Choking Game - Why

- Thrill-seeking,
- Perception that it is a low-risk activity,
- Peer pressure,
- Challenge or dare,
- A rite of passage,
- Curiosity
- A belief that it can make you high

BUT

- Blood deprivation to the brain kills **MILLIONS** of brain cells
- The blood surge can cause Stroke, Fits & Brain damage
- Can cause **DEATH**

The Choking Game – signs to look for

Physical Signs:

- Blood shot eyes
- Frequent Headaches
- Bruise marks on the neck
- Disorientation after spending time alone

• Other Signs

- Locked doors at home
- Ropes, scarves, belts hanging from bed/doorknob
- Ropes, belts, scarves knotted on the floor

If you are worried about a friend of yours – tell someone today

- American dream
- Blackout
- Knockout game
- Tingling
- Breath play
- Choke-out
- Dream game
- Fainting game
- Suffocation
- Roulette
- Flatliner
- California high
- Airplaning
- Gasp
- Pass-out
- Space cowboy
- Space monkey
- Funky chicken

DONT BE FOOLED THE CHOKING GAME KILLS

SHARE AND SAVE A LIFE