



Injury Prevention: Unintentional Foreign Body Ingestions among Kentucky Youth 10 and Under

Kids naturally explore the world by touch and taste; hence, it is natural and common for them to place things in their mouth. Sometimes these objects are swallowed and are passed naturally, while others obstruct breathing, cause choking and other harm that requires emergency care. These objects (both food and nonfood) are called foreign bodies, as they exist outside the human body and enter through the mouth. Most of these objects are found within the home. Keeping small objects secured away from children’s reach, cutting foods to an appropriate size, and paying close attention when they are playing with small items and eating can help keep your kids safe.

Each year from 2016 to 2020, an average of 1,326 Kentucky youth* visited an emergency department (ED) due to unintentional foreign body ingestion. The average cost of an ED visit was \$1,464.

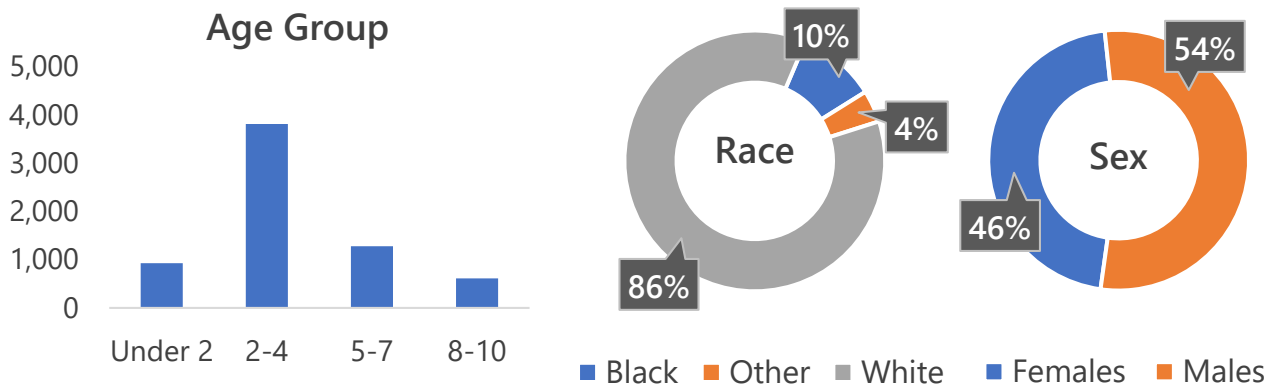
*Youth are limited to Kentucky residents 10 years of age and younger.

Unintentional Foreign Body Ingestion-Related ED Visits among Kentucky Youth by Year, 2016–2020¹



¹The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic that started in 2020 should be considered when interpreting data and trend analyses.

Unintentional Foreign Body Ingestion-Related ED Visits among Kentucky Youth by Age Group, Race, and Sex, 2016–2020¹

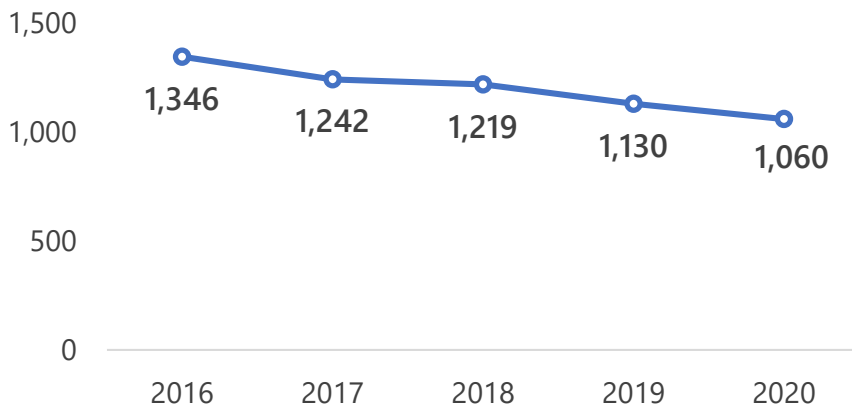


Of Kentucky youth ED visits for unintentional ingestion of foreign bodies:

- **58%** were between the ages of 2 and 4
- **54%** were male
- **86%** were white

ED visits represent encounters of care and could be greater than the number of individual patients treated in Kentucky. Data source: Kentucky Outpatient Services Database, Office of Health Data and Analytics. September 2021. Data are provisional and subject to change.

Poison Control Center Calls² for Unintentional Foreign Body Ingestion by Kentucky Youth, 2016–2020¹

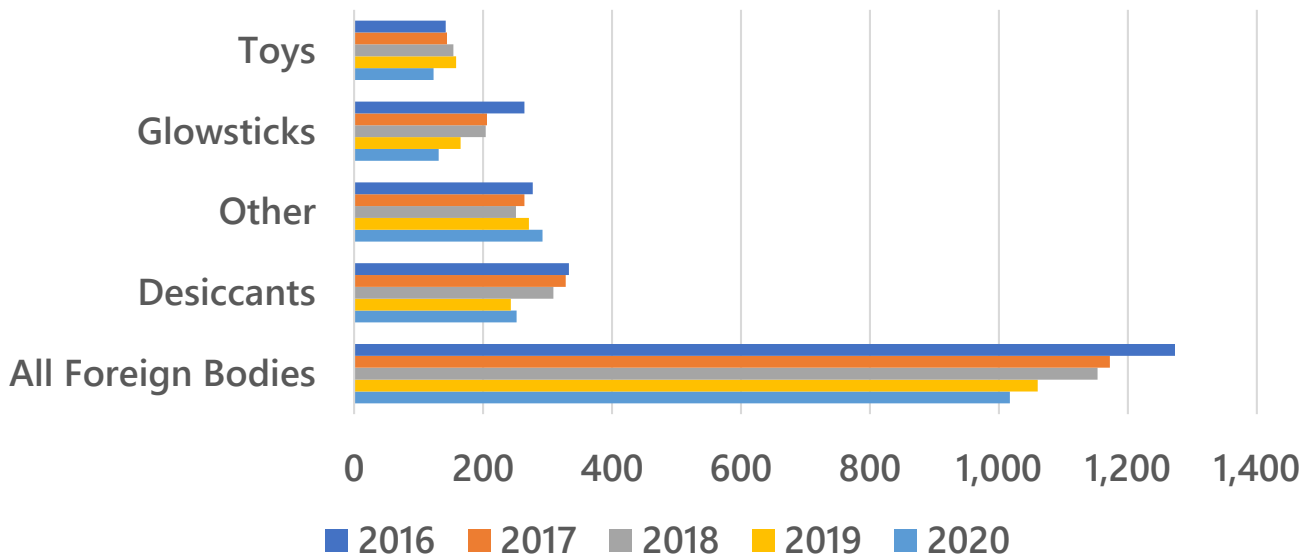


Youth foreign body ingestion-related calls to the Kentucky Poison Control Center have decreased approximately 25% from 2016–2020.



²Calls were placed by either parents, caregivers, or the youth, and data are not available to differentiate by caller. Data source: Kentucky Poison Control Center call data, Kentucky Poison Control Center of Norton Children’s Hospital, September 2021. Data are provisional and subject to change.

Poison Control Center Calls for Unintentional Foreign Body Ingestion by Kentucky Youth by Foreign Body Type, 2016–2020¹



Desiccants (e.g., silica gel packets), glowsticks, toys, and “other” types of foreign bodies made up approximately 80% of foreign body ingestion calls for Kentucky youth. The remaining 20% of calls concerned substances such as coins, human urine/feces, bubble-blowing solutions, soil, Christmas ornaments, incense, oxygen absorber packaging inserts, thermometers, or unknown substances.

Data source: Kentucky Poison Control Center call data, Kentucky Poison Control Center of Norton Children’s Hospital, September 2021. Data are provisional and subject to change.

Demographics of Poison Control Center Calls for Unintentional Foreign Body Ingestion by Kentucky Youth, 2016–2020

- **47%** were between the ages of 2 and 4
- **85%** were between birth and age 4
- **49%** were male, **49%** were female
- Approximately **88%** of foreign body ingestion events occurred in the child's home

Data source: Kentucky Poison Control Center call data, Kentucky Poison Control Center of Norton Children's Hospital, September 2021. Data are provisional and subject to change.

Unintentional Foreign Body Ingestion Safety

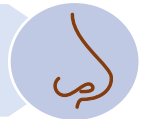
1-800-222-1222

Contact Poison Control as soon as possible if you suspect a foreign body ingestion.



Keep small objects that may be a choking hazard, such as coins, buttons, and marbles, away from children.

Teach children not to place foreign objects in their mouth, nose, or other body openings.



Avoid giving children under three years of age high-risk foods such as nuts, uncut hotdogs, cylindrical-shaped foods, seeds, small fruits and sweets.

Teach kids to not talk, laugh, play, run, or exercise when eating to decrease risks. Take care to eat slowly.



If your child swallows a foreign body and is not breathing, call 911 immediately!

Additional Resources

- Poison Control Center: www.poison.org
- CDC Choking Hazards www.cdc.gov/...choking-hazards.html
- Safe Kids Worldwide www.safekids.org/tip/choking-and-strangulation-prevention-tips