The Choking Game

Is the Choking Game new?
No. This "game" has been played for generations.

Is it safe?
No. This "game" has never been safe, but now even more dangerous as youth are using ligatures like belts and ropes, and are "playing" alone.

Who is "playing" the game?

The game is predominantly played by youth between the ages of 9-16. These adolescents are generally academically high-achieving and very active in sports. They do not want to risk getting caught with drugs or alcohol, and may play the Choking Game as an alternative.

Almost 90% of those who die from the Choking Game are between the ages of 11-16 and played the "game" alone. Boys are 87% more likely to die from playing the Choking Game than girls.

The Choking Game is also known as...
Blackout
Flatliner
Airplaning
Fainting Game
Dream Game
Suffocation
Roulette
The American Dream
California Choke
Purple Dragon
Cloud Nine

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The American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division is a non profit organization committed to preventing traumatic injuries and deaths through education.

We provide educational presentations and materials on a variety of trauma prevention topics. As a non profit, all presentations and materials are provided free of charge for any organization, school, business or community group in Pennsylvania.

Contact us today to learn more about our work.

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What is the Choking Game?

It is a dangerous activity youth play to get a brief high. Blood flow is cut off to the brain, depriving it of oxygen - all for just a few seconds of feeling high.

Youth choke using various means, including:
- Belts
- Ropes
- Bare hands
- Hyperventilation
- Having others push on their chest

The Choking Game can be played alone or in a group.

Why is the game so dangerous?

- Someone playing the game can become unconscious in a matter of seconds.
- In as little as three minutes of continuous strangulation (choking), basic functions such as memory, balance and the central nervous system start to fail.
- In four or five minutes, death occurs.
- The rush from playing can become addictive.
- Choking is even more dangerous when done alone because no one is there to release the pressure if the adolescent passes out with a ligature around his/her neck.

As many as 1,000 people die each year “playing” the Choking Game.

Choking Game Prevention Tips

1. INFORM yourself
   Learn the facts about the Choking Game. Make sure you are aware of its dangers. Statistics for the Choking Game are hard to find. Many of the deaths are misclassified as suicides.

2. TALK to your children
   Simply ask, “What do you know about the Choking Game?” The best weapon against this activity is information. Make sure you explain the dangers; many youth have no idea how deadly it can be. Explain the risk is not only death, but also seizures and permanent brain damage.

3. WATCH for warning signs
   Even after you have talked to your children, continue to watch for any signs they might be involved in the Choking Game.

Warning Signs

Is someone you know playing the Choking Game? Look for these signs:

- Demands for privacy
- Frequent and severe headaches
- Flushed face and red or bloodshot eyes
- Disorientation after being alone
- Loss of concentration
- Increased and uncharacteristic irritability
- Suspicious mark(s) on neck, sometimes hidden by clothing
- Questions about the effects, sensations or dangers of asphyxiation (applying pressure to restrict oxygen and/or blood flow to the brain)

Choking Game signs can also be found in your home:

- A strap, belt, rope, leash, ACE™ bandage or other object that could be used to choke lying near the child for no apparent reason
- Wear marks on bed posts, closet rods, doorknobs, etc.
- Locked bedroom doors