

## Why Is It Risky?

Pressure on the neck during sexual choking can cause the following:

- Difficulty breathing
- Voice changes from swelling or nerve injury
- Vision or hearing changes
- Sore throat
- Neck pain, bruising
- Headaches
- Memory loss
- Dizziness or loss of consciousness
- Loss of urine
- Seizures
- Stroke due to blood vessel damage
- Permanent brain damage because of too little blood flow to the brain

***Even with a partner***, choking during sex can lead to **death** due to not enough blood flow to the brain. This can occur within just a couple of minutes.

## Who Can You Talk To About Sexual Choking?

**Consider reaching out to a trusted adult such as:**



Your doctor



A therapist



A trusted friend or relative



**What you NEED TO KNOW about**

**If you experience any of the symptoms listed above, seek medical attention as soon as possible. Being honest with your healthcare provider about what happened could save your life.**



This informational brochure was created in collaboration with the Pediatric Subcommittee of the Training Institute on Strangulation Prevention's Medical Committee. The Institute is a program of Alliance for HOPE International.

**sexual**  
**CHOKING**  
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# what you need to know about sexual CHOKING

## What Is Sexual Choking?

Sexual choking (also known as breath play) is a form of strangulation during sex. If someone applies pressure to your neck it can partially or completely restrict blood-flow and/or air-flow to your brain. That pressure may be from hands, arms, legs, or ligature (like a rope, scarf, or leash). Sometimes people do this to themselves – this is called auto-erotic asphyxiation.

## Is Breath Play Ever OK?

- Choking another person is a crime. If a person is injured or dies, their sexual partner will likely face jail time even if it was accidental.
- Because choking is so dangerous, neither teenagers nor adults can legally consent to being choked/strangled. When you can't breathe, can't speak, or begin to lose consciousness you will not be able to ask your partner to stop, and you could die.

**Even with attempts at safety measures, sexual choking CANNOT be done without risk of serious injury or death.**



## Why Some Individuals Decide To Do It

Sexual choking has become very common in the US and other countries, especially amongst young people due to social media platforms, pornography, and even memes that normalize it and make it seem expected, fun, exciting, or kinky.



**CHOKING during sex is STRANGULATION**

## Boundaries During Sex

It is absolutely OK to say no to any sexual act you don't want. Even if sexual activity has already started, you have the right to change your mind. Have a conversation with your partner about what is OK and not OK with you. Set your boundaries – it is your body. If anything starts to happen that seems aggressive or scary, tell your partner to stop.