

Health and Welfare Alert



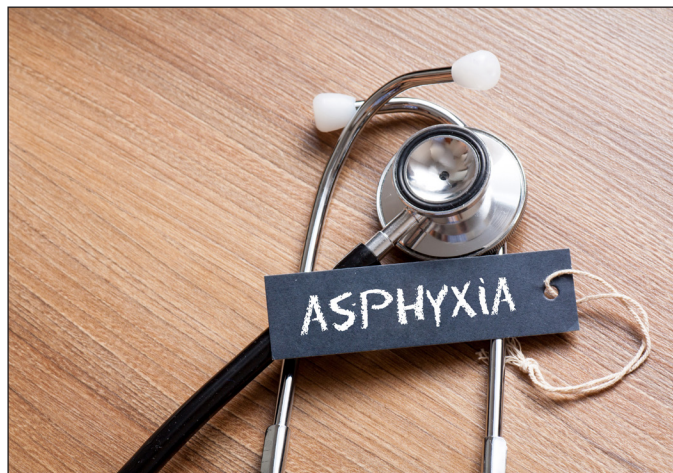
Ohio Administrative Code 5123:2-17-02 requires all developmental disabilities employees to review Health and Welfare Alerts released by the department as part of annual training. All previous alerts are listed on the department's website.

Preventing Suffocation #60-4-17

Suffocation, also known as asphyxiation, is the condition of being deprived of oxygen by having breathing stopped. It is often a silent killer, claiming the lives of people of all ages with little warning.

Types of suffocating accidents

- Infants being suffocated by a parent co-sleeping in the same bed
- A person becoming entangled in bed sheets, pillows, safety belts or harnesses that cut off oxygen flow
- A person falling between their bed and wall
- A person's airway being blocked with large, inedible items, such as socks, rags, etc.



Tips and Things to Remember

- Frequently check the person's home and work place to proactively address any safety concerns
- Ensure staff are aware of what supports a person needs to keep them safe
- Address any environmental concerns which could allow a person to get stuck between the bed and wall or to use bedding or pillows unsafely
- Never leave a person unattended when using a safety harness or belt that could place them at risk.
- Ensure that any safety harnesses or belts are properly positioned and not around the neck
- Have an person's team address any pica or mouthing-related risks in their plan
- Follow the **ABCs** of infant safe sleep practices: Baby sleeps safest **alone**, on their **back**, in a **crib**

Causes and Contributing Factors

- Inadequate supervision
- Mouthing objects, or a person putting objects in their mouth
- Not checking to ensure the person has a safe sleep environment
- Pica, or eating non-food items that could potentially obstruct breathing

Every week in Ohio,

3 infants die because of unsafe sleep environments

In 2016,

9 people with developmental disabilities died as a result of suffocation-related accidents out of the 92,000 people served