

Dangerous games your kids need to avoid

1. Cinnamon Challenge--The cinnamon challenge started after YouTube videos showed people swallowing large quantities of cinnamon without water. After finishing the challenge, those people were hit with severe coughing fits and sometimes vomiting. But those are just side effects of the more serious consequences, which can include lung collapse, pneumonia, and pulmonary edema (the abnormal build-up of fluid in the lungs).

2. Gallon Challenge--The MTV series, "Jackass", made the gallon challenge popular. It's where people are dared to drink an entire gallon of milk in an hour without vomiting. Anything less than whole milk is usually considered cheating. Of course, getting sick happens. The human stomach can't process an entire gallon of milk in one sitting. Taking part in the gallon challenge won't put a child at risk for long-term health problems, but you can expect a severe case of vomiting, diarrhea, cramps, and bloating.

3. Chubby Bunny--This game can go from funny to frightening very fast. The objective is to see how many full-size marshmallows kids can fit in their mouths before they can no longer say the words "chubby bunny." This game is especially popular on camp-outs. Strategies involve using every spare inch of the mouth, including the throat. Chubby bunny has resulted in choking deaths over the past few decades.

4. Ice and Salt Challenge--Middle school and high school kids are taking the "ice and salt challenge" to prove they can withstand pain. This involves wetting an area of skin, covering it with table salt, and applying pressure with an ice cube. Usually, water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit, but adding salt causes the freezing point to drop to as low as zero degrees Fahrenheit. When kids put ice to a salt-covered, moist area of skin, they will experience extreme pain. Depending on how long the ice stays on, kids could have blistering, first- or second-degree burns, or even frostbite.

5. Water Chugging--Parents worry about whether or not their children are drinking enough water, but few of them consider that their children are drinking too much. Chugging water might sound harmless, but "hyperhydration" can be deadly. A few years ago, a woman was competing in a contest sponsored by a radio station where she was challenged to drink as much water as she could while resisting using the bathroom for as long as possible. She died from what doctors call "water poisoning." Drinking too much water dilutes the sodium in the bloodstream, which can cause a fluid imbalance in cells. People who participate in water-chugging challenges will only experience nausea and headaches, but hyperhydration can also lead to brain swelling, respiratory arrest, coma, and death.

6. Choking Game--This isn't so much a game. Kids cut off their oxygen supply to create a warm, fuzzy, light-headed sensation similar to feeling high. The game is also known as the "fainting game", "seven minutes to heaven", "tapping out" or "sleeper hold". The key is to relieve the pressure just before losing consciousness. But by cutting off somebody's air supply with belts,

ropes, or bare hands, kids are putting themselves at risk for brain damage, stroke, and even death. Clues that your child is playing the choking game include unexplained bruises around the neck, frequent headaches, bloodshot eyes, and disorientation.

The school health office encourages parents to discuss the different "games" and there potential dangers with their children.