

“The Choking Game,”

Pass-out games, most commonly known as **“The Choking Game,”** have been around for centuries. Unlike auto-erotic asphyxiation (AeA), teens and tweens have been experimenting with this for non-sexual reasons (e.g., curiosity, peer pressure, the mistaken belief that it is safer than drugs) because they are unaware of the dangers.

This generations-old issue has seen a recent resurgence as a result of You Tube, making the internet a cyber-playground. Kids learn this deadly activity from other kids all across the world and believe from other kids that it is harmless. They lack effective education to combat what they hear on the web, putting them all at risk.

The Choking Game differs from other risky activities in that it:

- is not illegal and has no deterrent of legal consequence;
- does not require acquisition of a product;
- can be “played” alone; and
- interrupts basic brain function, therefore it is impossible to know when brain damage or death will occur.

It is an equal-opportunity danger – it knows no racial, cultural, religious or socio-economic boundaries.

While studies estimate 6 – 16% of teens have participated in pass-out games, anecdotal reports indicate the numbers to be much higher. Increasing articles cite The Choking Game as one of the top dangerous behaviors that need to be on parents’ radar.

Statistically it has been considered an aberration because the numbers of deaths and injuries attributed to ‘The Choking Game’ appear small, hence unimportant. **But statistics do not tell the story.** There is no death code for The Choking Game, nor is there an injury code for Choking Game injuries. In addition to a lack of codes to correctly gather statistics, there is no standardized way for law enforcement and medical examiners to determine cause of death. As a result, **most Choking Game deaths are misclassified as suicides.** And choking game-related injuries are rarely

reported with the correct attribution. Even when a correct determination is made, many families bear their grief in silence because of shock and shame, “How could my child have done something so stupid? What was s/he thinking?”

For more information you can visit www.petition2congress.com/5809/stop-choking-game or www.erikscause.org.

<http://www.nbclosangeles.com/news/local/Choking-Game-Mother-Victim-Rogg-Family-Students-School-290349111.html>