



ERIK'S CAUSE

*Kids like Erik are dying every week –
YOU CAN HELP!*

Help Stop the Choking Game

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FACT SHEET

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It goes by lots of names, including ...

Pass Out Challenge *Knock-Out* **TapOut** **Hangman** **FaintingGame**
GoodKidsGame *Airplaning* **BlackOut** **Elevator** *Flatliner* **Space Monkey**

Frequently misunderstood by adults yet rampant on social media, pass-out challenges (often called the “Choking Game”) have been around for generations. Studies indicate that kids experiment with the intoxicating effects of these activities for non-sexual reasons such as curiosity, peer pressure, and the mistaken belief that it is safer than drugs. Easy access to millions of how-to-play videos on the internet permit this activity to flourish, allowing kids to believe it is safe without any understanding of its dangers.

Ways Kids “Play”

The physical goal of this activity is to restrict cerebral blood flow to the point of nearly or actually passing out for a variety of reasons including curiosity, competition, dare, and/or to experience an altered state. This is accomplished by a variety of methods, the most popular being:

- compression of the carotid arteries using hands or a ligature,
- compression to the chest after hyperventilation, and
- competition or dare to see who can resist passing out the longest under a choke hold (e.g., tap-out or submission holds typically used in mixed martial arts).

Why would kids try this?

- They believe it is safe
- Peer pressure
- Challenge or dare
- Curiosity
- The thrill of escaping a so-called near-death experience

Risks Include

- Concussions and injuries from falling
- Seizures
- Memory Loss
- Retinal Hemorrhaging
- Stroke
- Brain Damage
- Death

Where are the Death and Injury Statistics?

- No public health databases currently monitor pass-out activities.
- Youth are rarely forthcoming about the activity when injured. Thus practitioners may not be aware that pass out games are a possible cause for unexplained falls and other injuries.
- Injuries are rarely attributed correctly and *many deaths are misclassified as suicide.*

Did You Know ...

- More than 50% of kids surveyed have heard of the Choking Game
- 6% – 16% of kids surveyed admit that they have “played” it
- A majority of these kids were unaware of the dangers

Meanwhile...

- 92.9% of parents were unaware of pass-out activities until the death of their child from it
- Close to 33% of physicians are unaware of this life-threatening activity
- Many choking game deaths are misclassified as suicide
- Without blood and oxygen ...
 - Within 3 minutes brain damage starts
 - Between 4 and 5 minutes the body begins to shut down
 - 10 minutes can be too late

**Since you can't SEE the brain function,
you can't KNOW when the damage happens ...
This activity can kill kids the very first time**

**Between 3 and 6 pm on school days are the peak hours
when kids experiment with risky behaviors**

**MILLIONS of “how to play” videos are easy to find on YouTube and
other social media – easy access for our kids to watch!**

An example of the increase in views and available videos over 3 years:

In 2015:	
In 2018:	

In 3 years ... on YouTube alone*
125% increase of views of this video
1,300% increase in overall “pass out challenge” videos
* Excludes other social media formats and names for this game

Even Smart Strong Kids can make Dumb Choices with Deadly Consequences

**Your kids are not immune. The risk is real. Some kids only tried this once or twice.
They didn't know they were gambling with their lives.**

Learn how we can help your community at www.erikscause.org

Sources include 2008 Oregon Healthy Teens Study (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5901a1.htm>), 2012 Texas Crime Victim's Institute, Criminal Justice Center, Sam Houston State University (http://dev.cicenter.org/files/cvi/Choking_Game_Report.pdf, Center for Disease Control (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mms5706a1.htm>), American Academy of Pediatrics (<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/125/1/82>), www.erikscause.org