

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW IF YOU SWALLOW OR INSERT A FOREIGN OBJECT

### WHAT IS A FOREIGN OBJECT?

Foreign objects are things that should not be in the human body, like:

- \* weapons
- \* drug-filled balloons
- \* razor blades
- \* razors
- \* cell phones
- \* pens
- \* batteries
- \* knives, forks, and spoons
- \* staples/nails
- \* paper clips
- \* cartons
- \* foam cups

### WHAT COULD HAPPEN IF I SWALLOW OR INSERT A FOREIGN OBJECT?

- \* You could die
- \* Pain that may be severe
- \* Problems breathing
- \* Fever
- \* Feeling sick and throwing up
- \* Serious or permanent injury to body tissue
- \* Your bladder or bowel could burst
- \* Bleeding
- \* Serious infection
- \* Irritation or swelling
- \* Blockage of airway or intestines  
(due to change of intestine position or bowel swelling from soaking up body fluids)
- \* The foreign object could get stuck or move to another part of the body. You may need medical help to remove it.
- \* Signs of an Overdose:
  - Seizures
  - Sleepiness or coma
  - Anxiety or jitters
  - Breathing problems
  - Chest pain
  - Rapid heart beat
  - Death

### HOW IS A FOREIGN OBJECT IN THE BODY FOUND?

- ⇒ Patient report
- ⇒ Report from observer
- ⇒ Physical exam
- ⇒ X-ray
- ⇒ Metal detector

**MEDICAL STAFF CANNOT ALWAYS SEE A FOREIGN OBJECT IN AN X-RAY. TO STAY HEALTHY, IT IS VITAL THAT YOU REPORT WHAT YOU HAVE INSERTED OR INGESTED.**

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW IF YOU SWALLOW OR INSERT A FOREIGN OBJECT

PERMANENT DAMAGE TO YOUR BODY MAY OCCUR FROM SINGLE OR REPEATED SWALLOWING OR INSERTION OF A FOREIGN OBJECT.

### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I HAVE A FOREIGN OBJECT IN MY BODY?

Tell health care staff what you swallowed or inserted. Promptly report any of these symptoms:

- ◆ Pain
- ◆ Bleeding
- ◆ Difficulty breathing
- ◆ Hard to swallow
- ◆ Problems with bowel movements
- ◆ Urination problems
- ◆ Feeling warm or feverish
- ◆ Anxiety or jitters
- ◆ Drowsiness
- ◆ Other changes in how you feel

Follow up with your health care provider as directed.

### TREATMENT OF A FOREIGN OBJECT IN THE BODY

The location and type of foreign object determines treatment which may include:

- ◆ Waiting for passage of the foreign object
- ◆ Removal by suction
- ◆ Removal with instruments (possibly including use of a scope)
- ◆ Surgical removal

### SERIOUS AND LIFELONG COMPLICATIONS OF FOREIGN OBJECT INSERTION/INGESTION MAY INCLUDE:

- ◆ Permanent Colostomy (*patient wears a bag attached to abdomen to collect feces*)
- ◆ Permanent Urostomy (*patient wears a bag attached to abdomen to collect urine*)
- ◆ Permanent Fistulas (*abnormal connection from hollow organ to skin or between two hollow organs. An example of a fistula is an abnormal tract from the rectum to the skin*)
- ◆ Internal scarring and problems with organ function
- ◆ Scarring of the skin
- ◆ Permanent brain damage
- ◆ Permanent organ damage