

Four choke to death on 'mochi'

Kyodo News

Four men choked to death Monday and Tuesday in Tokyo and Niigata and Ibaraki prefectures, and seven other people in the capital became critically ill after choking on traditional New Year's "mochi" rice cakes, officials said.

A 68-year-old man in the Tokyo suburb of Fuchu and a 76-year-old man in Sumida Ward died Tuesday after choking on the rice cakes, while a 74-year-old man in Ojiya, Niigata Prefecture, and an 80-year-old man in Chikusei, Ibaraki Prefecture, choked to death Monday.

In Tokyo, 16 people ranging in age from 65 to 91 were hospitalized after choking on mochi Monday and Tuesday, including the two fatalities, and seven lost consciousness and were in serious condition, the Tokyo Fire Department said.

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