

Choking Prevention and First Aid

When children begin crawling, or eating table foods, parents must be aware of the dangers and risks of choking. Choking occurs when food or small objects get caught in the throat and block the airway. This prevents oxygen from getting to the lungs and the brain. When the brain goes without oxygen for more than 4 minutes, brain damage or even death may occur. Many children die from choking each year. Most children who choke to death are younger than 5 years of age. Two thirds of choking victims are infants younger than 1 year of age. Balloons, balls, marbles, pieces of toys, and foods cause the most choking deaths.

Dangerous household items

Keep the following household items away from infants and children:

- Latex balloons
- Coins
- Marbles
- Toys with small parts
- Toys that can be compressed to fit entirely into a child's mouth
- Small balls
- Pen or marker caps
- Small button-type batteries
- Cords, ropes, or strings around the baby's neck can choke him. Keep cords away from the crib.

What you can do to prevent choking

- Learn cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) (basic life support).
- Be aware that balloons pose a choking risk to children of any age.
- Keep the above foods from children until 4 years of age.
- Insist that children eat at the table, or at least while sitting down. They should never run, walk, play, or lie down with food in their mouths.
- Cut food for infants and young children into pieces no larger than one-half inch and teach them to chew their food well.
- Supervise mealtime for infants and young children.
- Be aware of older children's actions. Many choking incidents occur when older brothers or sisters give dangerous foods, toys, or small objects to a younger child.
- Avoid toys with small parts and keep other small household items out of reach of infants and young children.
- Follow the age recommendations on toy packages. Age guidelines reflect the safety of a toy based on any possible choking hazard as well as the child's physical and mental abilities at various ages.
- Check under furniture and between cushions for small items that children could find and put in their mouths.
- Do not let infants and young children play with coins.

Be prepared if your child starts to choke. Learn how to save the life of a choking child.

Choking/CPR

If alone with a child who is choking:

1. Shout for help.
2. Start rescue efforts for one minute.
3. Call 911 or an emergency number

You should start first aid for choking if...

- The child cannot breathe at all (the chest is not moving up and down)
- The child cannot cough, talk, or make a normal voice sound.
- The child is found unconscious. (Go to CPR)

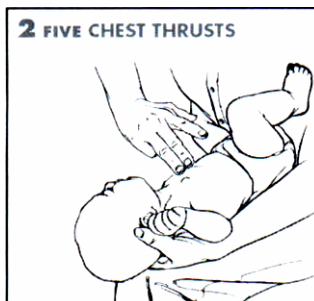
Do not start first aid for choking if...

- The child can breathe, cry, talk, or make a normal voice sound.
- The child can cough, sputter, or move air at all. The child's normal reflexes are working to clear the airway

Begin the following if the infant is choking' and is unable to breathe. However, if the infant is coughing crying, speaking, or able to breathe at all do not do any of the following. Depending on the infant's condition, call 911 or our office for further advice.



▲
Alternating
▼



Alternate back blows and chest thrusts until the object is dislodged or the Infant becomes unconscious. If the infant becomes unconscious, begin CPR.

Infant CPR (Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation)

To be used when the infant is unconscious or when breathing stops.

1. Open Airway

- Look for movement of the chest and abdomen.
- Listen for sounds of breathing.
- Feel for breath on your cheek.
- Open airway as shown.
- Look for a foreign object in the mouth. If you can see an object in the infant's mouth but not in his throat, sweep the object out carefully with your finger. Do not try a finger sweep if the object is in the infant's throat rather than in his mouth because the object could be pushed further into the throat.



2. Rescue Breathing

- **Position** head and chin with both hands as shown – head gently tilted back, chin lifted.
- **Seal** your mouth over the infant's mouth and nose.
- **Blow gently**, enough air to make chest rise and fall 2 times.



If no rise or fall, repeat 1 & 2. If no response, treat for blocked airway. (See “Infant choking” above.)

3. Assess Response

- Place your ear next to the infant's mouth and look, listen, and feel for normal breathing or coughing.
- Look for body movement.

If you cannot see, hear, or feel signs of normal breathing, coughing, or movement, start chest compressions.



4. Chest Compressions

- Place 2 fingers of one hand over the lower half of the chest. Avoid the bottom tip of the breastbone.
- Compress chest ½" to 1" deep.
- Alternate 5 compressions with 1 breath.
- Compress chest 100 times per minute.



Check for signs of normal breathing, coughing, or movement every minute.

If at any time an object is coughed up or the infant/child starts to breathe, call 911 our office for further advice.