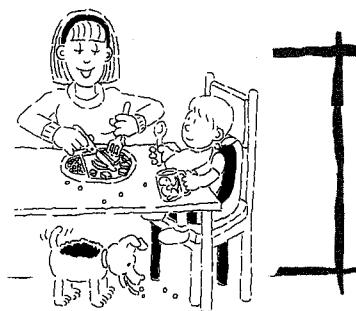


Choking Prevention and First Aid for Infants and Children



When children begin crawling, or eating table foods, parents must be aware of the dangers and risks of choking. Children younger than 5 years can easily choke on food and small objects.

Choking occurs when food or small objects get caught in the throat and block the airway. This can prevent 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. Two thirds of choking victims are infants younger than 1 year.

Balloons, balls, marbles, pieces of toys, and foods cause the most choking deaths.

Read more about choking prevention and first aid.

Dangerous foods

Do not feed children younger than 4 years round, firm food unless it is chopped completely. Round, firm foods are common choking dangers. When infants and young children do not grind or chew their food well, they may try to swallow it whole. The following foods can be choking hazards:

- Hot dogs
- Nuts and seeds
- Chunks of meat or cheese
- Whole grapes
- Hard, gooey, or sticky candy
- Popcorn
- Chunks of peanut butter
- Raw vegetables
- Fruit chunks, such as apple chunks
- Chewing gum

Dangerous household items

Keep the following household items away from infants and children:

- Balloons
- Coins
- Marbles
- Toys with small parts
- Toys that can be squeezed to fit entirely into a child's mouth
- Small balls
- Pen or marker caps
- Small button-type batteries
- Medicine syringes

What you can do to prevent choking

- *Learn CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation)* (basic life support).
- *Be aware that balloons pose a choking risk* to children up to 8 years of 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 the 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*.

First aid for the child who is choking

Make a point to learn the instructions on the reverse side of this brochure. Post the chart in your home. However, these instructions should *not* take the place of an approved class in basic first aid, CPR, or emergency prevention. Contact your local American Red Cross office or the American Heart Association to find out about classes offered in your area. Most of the classes teach basic first aid, CPR, and emergency prevention along with what to do for a choking infant or child. Your pediatrician also can help you understand these steps and talk to you about the importance of supervising mealtime and identifying dangerous foods and objects.

The information contained in this publication should not be used as a substitute for the medical care and advice of your pediatrician. There may be variations in treatment that your pediatrician may recommend based on individual facts and circumstances.

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CHOKING/CPR

IF ALONE WITH A CHILD WHO IS CHOKING...

SHOUT FOR HELP.

START RESCUE EFFORTS.

CALL 911 OR YOUR LOCAL 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 or talk, or looks blue.
- The child is found unconscious. (Go to CPR.)

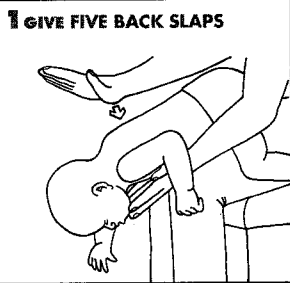
DO NOT START FIRST AID FOR CHOKING IF...

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

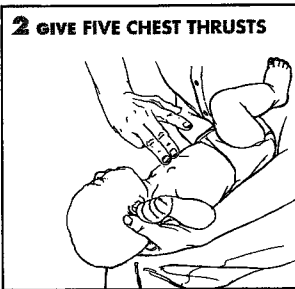
FOR INFANTS YOUNGER THAN 1 YEAR

INFANT CHOKING

If the infant is choking and is unable to breathe, cough, cry, or speak, follow these steps. Have someone call 911, or if you are alone call 911 as soon as possible.



ALTERNATING WITH



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

INFANT CPR

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

1 OPEN AIRWAY

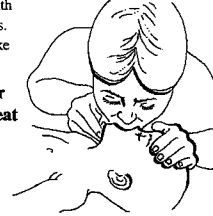
- Open airway (tilt head, lift chin).
- Take 5 to 10 seconds to check if the child is breathing after the airway is opened. Look for up and down movement of the chest and abdomen. Listen for breath sounds at the nose and mouth. Feel for breath on your cheek. If opening the airway results in breathing, other than an occasional gasp, do not give breaths.
- If there is no breathing look for a foreign object in the mouth. If you can see an object in the infant's mouth, sweep it out carefully with your finger. Then attempt rescue breathing. Do NOT try a blind finger sweep if the object is not seen, because it could be pushed farther into the throat.



2 RESCUE BREATHING

- Position head and chin with both hands as shown—head gently tilted back, chin lifted.
- Take a normal breath (not a deep breath).
- Seal your mouth over the infant's mouth and nose.
- Give 2 breaths, each rescue breath over 1 second with a pause between breaths. Each breath should make the chest rise.

If no rise or fall after the first breath, repeat steps 1 and 2. If still no rise or fall, continue with step 3 (below).



3 CHEST COMPRESSIONS

- Place 2 fingers of 1 hand on the breastbone just below the nipple line.
- Compress chest 1/3 to 1/2 the depth of the chest.
- Alternate 30 compressions with 2 breaths.
- Compress chest at rate of 100 times per minute.



Be sure someone calls 911 as soon as possible. If you are alone, call 911 or your local emergency number after 5 cycles of breaths and chest compressions (about 2 minutes).

If at any time an object is coughed up or the infant/child starts to breathe, call 911 or your local emergency number.

Ask your pediatrician for information on choking/CPR instructions for children older than 8 years and for information on an approved first aid or CPR course in your community.