

SAFETY MEMO

Did you know?

April 17, 2023 – First Aid for Choking in a Conscious Person – Part 2

This is Part 2 of a series on providing first aid to someone who is choking. Call 911 for immediate assistance when you see someone choking.

Different First Aid Methods for People who are Choking

Stop maneuvers as soon as the airway is clear. Once the obstruction has cleared the person's throat or airway, it is important for the person to seek additional medical care as the force applied to abdominal thrusts or chest thrusts need to be assessed by a professional. You must call 911 if the person loses consciousness, regardless of the duration of choking.

Administering First Aid to an Adult or Child¹

Steps for 5 Back Blows (figure 1)

1. Stand to the side and behind the choking person.
2. Place one of your arms under the person's arm and across their chest for support.
3. Bend the person forward at the waist.
4. Use the heel of your other hand to strike forcefully the person between the shoulder blades.

Steps for 5 Abdominal Thrusts (figure 1)

1. Have the person stand straight and stand behind them with one of your feet between their feet.
2. Use two fingers to find their navel.
3. With your other hand, make a fist and place it right above your fingers.
4. Use the first hand to cover your fist.
5. Pull inward and upward.

5 Chest thrusts are done when you can't get your arms around the abdomen of the person as in a pregnant lady (figure 2). They are done in the same manner as abdominal thrusts but in the center of the chest.



Figure 1: Adult/Child Back Blows & Abdominal Thrusts



Figure 2: Adult Chest thrust for large or pregnant person

Helping Yourself when Choking²

If you are choking and alone, call 911 and leave the phone line open (you are unable to talk/make noise when choking, so this will indicate to the dispatcher to send help). If there are people nearby, move to a location where you are likely to be noticed. Then do abdominal self-thrusts:

1. Place a fist above your navel.
2. Place your other hand over the fist.
3. Pull inward and upward or
4. Bend over a hard surface such as a chair back

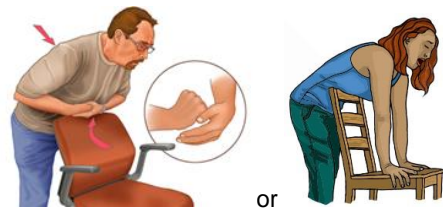


Figure 3: Abdominal Thrust on Yourself

Steps to Administer First Aid to an Infant³

Steps for 5 Back Blows

1. Lay the baby face-down along your forearm and hold their head lower than their body.
2. Use the heel of your other hand to strike the baby between the shoulder blades with fingers up.

Steps for 5 Chest Thrusts

1. Lay the baby face-up along your forearm and hold their head lower than their body.
2. Place two fingers in the center of the baby's chest below their nipple line.
3. Do quick chest thrusts 4 cm (1½ inches) deep and let the chest rise each time.



Figure 4: Infant Back Blows & Chest Thrusts

¹ St John Ambulance. (January 2019). First Aid Reference Guide, 4th edition. Retrieved from https://www.sja.ca/sites/default/files/2021-05/First%20aid%20reference%20guide_V4.1_Public.pdf

² Choking: First Aid. *Mayo Clinic*. Oct 11, 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid/first-aid-choking/basics/art-20056637>

³ Choking First Aid (Infant, Up to Age 1 Year). *Fairview*. 2022. Retrieved from <https://www.fairview.org/patient-education/511205EN>