

HELP! My child is choking!

One of the most frequent concerns for parents is what to do if their child chokes. Choking is frightening, but rarely fatal. Babies and young children can choke on anything that can fit through a loo roll. To prevent choking, keep small objects out of reach, cut up food into very small pieces and supervise children while they're eating, especially if they're under five years old.

If a child shows signs of choking, stay calm and ask them to cough to help remove the object.

Clearing a blockage - babies under 1 year

- ❑ First look in the baby's mouth and if there is something obvious in the mouth, remove it with finger tips. DO NOT put your fingers down a baby or child's throat, or finger sweep the mouth, as this can make matters worse by pushing the obstruction further down or by causing swelling.
- ❑ Lay the baby downwards on your forearm or across your legs, supporting them under their chin and using the flat of your hand, give a firm back blow between the shoulder blades. Give up to five back blows and check between each blow to see if the blockage has cleared.
- ❑ If the blockage hasn't cleared, lay the baby on their back, place two fingers in the centre of the chest just below the nipple line and give up to five chest thrusts. Check to see if the blockage has cleared between each chest thrust.

- ❑ If baby is still choking, call 999 (or 112) and continue alternate five back blows and five chest thrusts until emergency help arrives.
- ❑ If at any point baby becomes unconscious, commence CPR.



Clearing a blockage - children over 1 year and adults

- ❑ Bend the child forward, supporting them on their chest with the other hand and use the flat of your hand to give a sharp back blow between the shoulder blades.
- ❑ Check to see if the blockage has cleared before giving another blow. If the blockage hasn't cleared after five blows, try abdominal thrusts/Heimlich manoeuvre:
- ❑ Stand behind the child and place one hand in a fist under their rib cage. Use the other hand to pull up and under to dislodge the obstruction. Perform abdominal thrusts up to 5 times, checking each time to see if the obstruction has cleared. Anyone who has received abdominal thrusts must be seen by a doctor.
- ❑ If the child is still choking, call 999 (or 112) and alternate five back blows and five abdominal thrusts until emergency help arrives.
- ❑ If at any point the child becomes unconscious, commence CPR.



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