

Choking Prevention and First Aid for Infants and Children

Guidelines for Parents



When children begin eating table foods, parents must be aware of the dangers and risks of choking. Older infants and children under age four can easily choke on food and small objects.

Choking occurs when food or small objects block the airway. This prevents oxygen from getting to the lungs and the brain. When the brain goes without oxygen for more than four minutes, brain damage or even death may occur. Many children die from choking each year. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the American Heart Association (AHA) believe that parents and other caregivers can often prevent choking. The AAP and the AHA offer the following choking prevention and first aid information for parents and caregivers of infants and children.

Dangerous foods

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

- Hot dogs
- Nuts
- Chunks of meat or cheese
- Whole grapes
- Hard or sticky candy
- Popcorn
- Chunks of peanut butter
- Raw carrots

Dangerous household items

Keep the following household items away from infants and children:

- Latex balloons
- Coins
- Marbles
- Small toy parts
- Pen or marker caps
- Small button-type batteries
- Small compressible toys that can fit entirely into a child's mouth

What you can do to prevent choking

- *Keep dangerous foods from children* until 4 years of age. Nuts should not be given to children until age 7 or older.
- *Insist that children eat at the table*, or at least while sitting down. They should never run, walk, or play with food in their mouths.
- *Cut food for infants and young children* and teach them to chew their food well.
- *Supervise mealtime* for infants and young children. 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.

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, cardiopulmonary resuscitation (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 last 6 to 8 hours and teach basic first aid, CPR, and emergency prevention along with what to do for a choking infant or child. Your pediatrician can also 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.

From your doctor

Choking/CPR

Call 911 or an Emergency Number after starting rescue efforts.

LEARN AND PRACTICE CPR

You should start first aid if...

- The child cannot breathe at all (the chest is not moving up and down).
- The child's airway is so blocked that there's only a weak cough and a loss of color.
- The child cannot cough, talk, or make a normal voice sound.
- The child is found unconscious. (Go to CPR.)

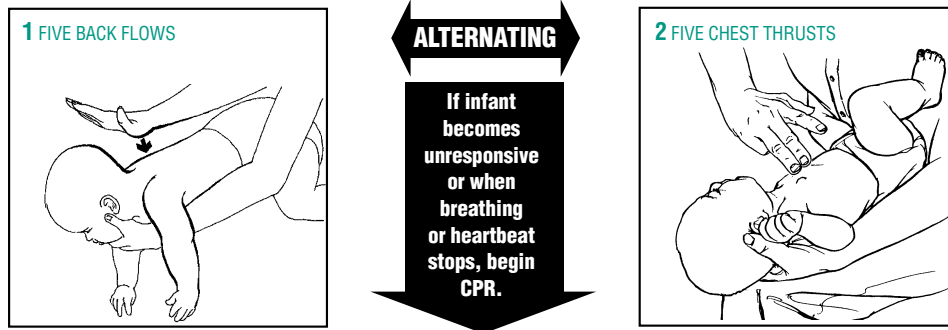
DO NOT start first aid if...

- The child can breathe, cry, talk, or make a normal voice sound.
- The child has a strong cough. (A strong cough means there is little or no blockage.)

For Infants Under One Year

Infant Choking

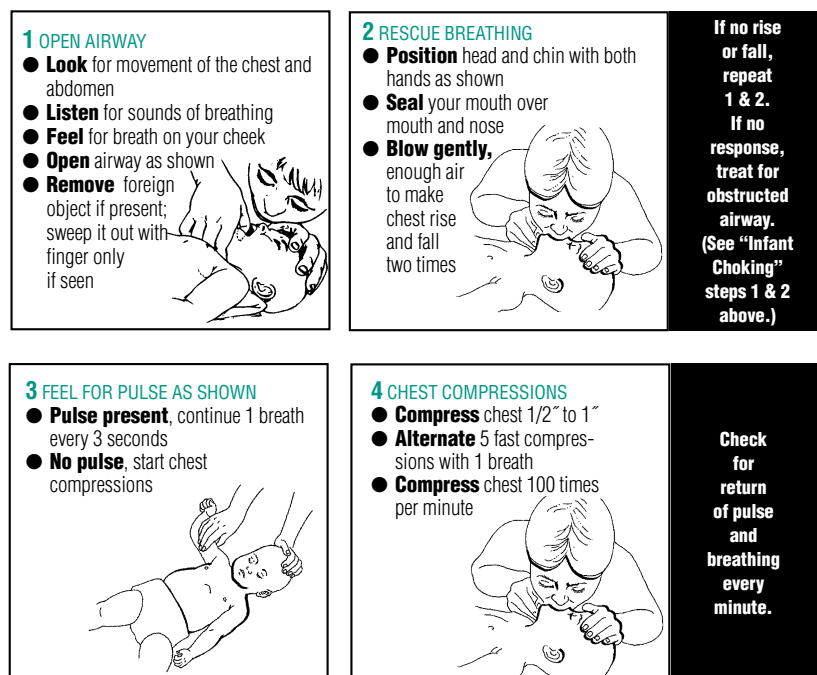
Begin the following if the infant is choking and is unable to breathe. However, if the infant is coughing, crying, or speaking, DO NOT do any of the following, but call your doctor for further advice.



Infant CPR

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

To be used when infant is unresponsive or when breathing or heart beat stops.



For children over one year

CHILD Choking

Begin the following if the child is choking and is unable to breathe. However, if the child is coughing, crying, or speaking, **DO NOT** do any of the following, but call your doctor for further advice.



conscious



CHILD CPR

Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation

To be used when child is unresponsive or when breathing or heart beat 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
- **Remove** foreign object if present; sweep it out with finger only if seen

2 RESCUE BREATHING

- **Position** head and chin with both hands as shown
- **Seal** your mouth over child's mouth
- **Pinch** child's nose
- **Blow** enough air to make child's chest rise and fall two times

If no rise or fall, repeat 1 & 2. If no response, treat for obstructed airway. (See "Unconscious" step 3 below.)

3 THRUST UPWARDS IN MIDLINE JUST ABOVE THE NAVEL (up to 5 times)

UNCONSCIOUS

Repeat child CPR steps 1-3 until chest rises and falls.

4 FEEL FOR PULSE AS SHOWN

- **Pulse present**, continue 1 breath every 3 seconds
- **No pulse**, start chest compressions

5 CHEST COMPRESSIONS

- **Compress** chest 1" to 1 1/2"
- **Alternate** 5 compressions with 1 breath
- **Compress** chest 100 times per minute

One finger width above lower tip of breast bone

If at any time an object is coughed up or the infant/child starts to breath, call your doctor for further advice. Ask your physician for information on an approved first aid course or CPR course in your community.