



Know How to Help a Choking Victim

Choking is the fourth leading cause of unintentional death in the U.S., according to *Injury Facts*®. The risk is not only for young children, but actually begins to rise for those 45 and older. Knowing how to help a choking victim, who may even be yourself, can save a life.

Checklist for caring for an adult choking victim:

- If the person is coughing productively, encourage continued coughing to expel the obstructing item on his or her own.
- If the person cannot cough, speak, or breathe, looks frantic or signals he or she is not getting enough air:
 - Ask if the person is choking. If the victim nods or indicates yes, ask if you can help.
 - Take position behind the victim. Stand with one foot forward, placing your foot between the person's heels.
 - Make a fist with one hand and place it just above the navel. Place your other hand on top of your fist and give quick thrusts inward and upward to clear the object.
- If a choking victim becomes unresponsive, give CPR starting with chest compressions. Look inside the mouth each time you open the mouth to give breaths and remove any objects seen.

If you're the only rescuer, perform abdominal thrusts before calling 9-1-1 or your local emergency number. If another person is with you, have that person call for help while you perform first aid. If the person becomes unconscious, perform standard CPR with chest compressions and rescue breaths.

Checklist for self-treating choking

If you are choking and alone:

- Try to remain as calm as possible.
- If a telephone is nearby, call 9-1-1 or your local emergency number immediately. Even if you can't speak, this will prompt a response by police to your location.
- Try to expel the object by finding a hard corner surface, such as a countertop, chair or edge of a table.
- Lean over and push your abdomen against the back of the chair or other firm object.

When seconds count, being prepared for these types of first aid emergencies can mean the difference between life and death. Being trained in first aid and CPR allows you to help protect your family, friends and co-workers.

