

How to Help a Choking Child

As long as your child is coughing and able to talk, give them a chance to dislodge the foreign body on their own. If your child becomes silent and isn't able to breathe, begin abdominal thrusts immediately.

Step 1:

- Call 911 or ask someone else to call 911.

Step 2:

- Squat behind your child as he or she stands in front of you.

Step 3:

- Place one hand on top of the pelvis line, in the middle of the abdomen. Put your other hand on top of the first. Pull upward, forcefully, toward the child's nose, in a series of five quick thrusts. If that doesn't work:

Step 4:

- Place the child face down across your lap. Put one fist below the point where the ribs meet the breastbone.

Step 5:

- Give a solid whack to the back, between the lower shoulder blades, with your other hand.

Step 6:

- If the child begins to lose consciousness, lower her slowly to the floor. Be sure an emergency department has been called.

Step 7:

- Straddle your child's thighs or sit at their side. Sit at their feet if they are very young.

Step 8:

- Put the heel of one hand at the belly button and thrust upward toward the nose five times. These motions are called abdominal thrusts.

Step 9:

- Open the child's mouth and look inside to see if you have dislodged the foreign body. If you see a foreign body, sweep it out with a hooked finger. Tilt your child's head to the side, in case of vomiting.

Step 10:

- Attempt to open the airway by tilting their head and lifting their chin. Look and listen for signs of breathing.

Step 11:

- Give your child a breath by pinching their nose with your fingers and putting your lips over their mouth to form a tight seal. Exhale forcefully into their mouth. Watch to see if their chest rises with your breath. If not, your child's airway is still blocked.

Step 12:

- Continue with abdominal thrusts.

Extra Considerations

- One study has shown that 85 percent of serious choking incidents in young children involve peanuts. Because of their size, peanuts often lodge in the tracheae of children under age 6.
- Sweeping foreign objects from the mouth should be done with one hooked finger, which helps ensure you will not lodge the object in the throat.
- If you are alone with a choking child and must dial 9-1-1, take the child with you to the telephone or bring the telephone to the child, so that you can perform abdominal thrusts as you are calling 911.
- If an older child is choking, stand behind them, put your arms around their waist; find the spot in the chest halfway between the waist and lower ribs. Gently press the clenched fist of your left hand as far as you comfortably can. Firmly clasp your right hand over your clenched fist and give short, sharp "hugs" pushing inwards and upwards as far as you can. Repeat if necessary. Air pressure will pop out the blocking object.



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