

Choking first aid: children and teenagers

Signs a child is choking: what to do



Signs a child is choking include coughing, grabbing the throat, gagging, noisy breathing, distress, struggling to breath, no sounds, paleness, changed colour in the face, and loss of consciousness.

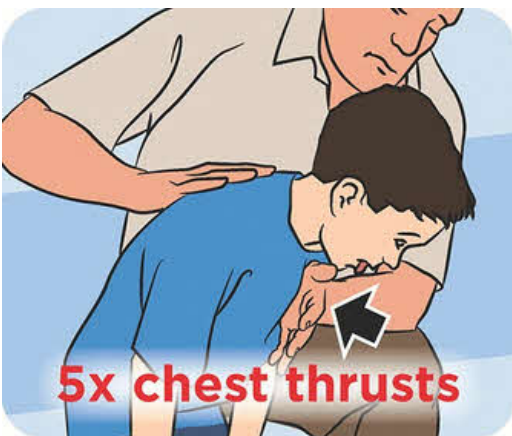


If a child shows signs of choking, stay calm. **Encourage the child to cough** to clear the blockage. If it doesn't clear or the child can't cough properly, stay with them and **phone 995** immediately. Follow the steps to clear a blockage, shown next.

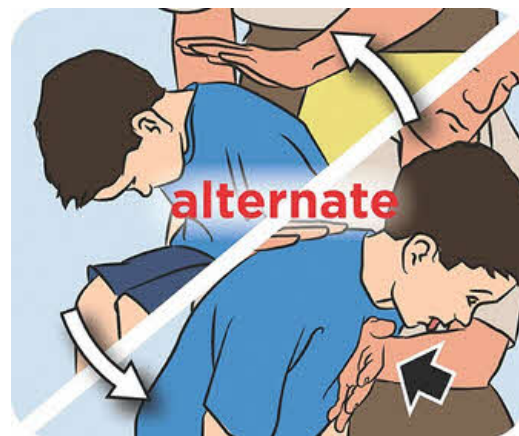


Bend the child forward. With the heel of your hand, give a **firm back blow** between the shoulder blades. Give up to 5 blows. Look in the child's mouth between each blow to check whether the blockage has cleared. If it hasn't cleared, try chest thrusts.

Choking first aid: next steps



Put one hand in the middle of the child's back and the other hand in the centre of the chest. Use the heel of the hand on the chest to do 5 chest thrusts – like CPR compressions but slower and sharper. Look in the child's mouth between each thrust to check whether the blockage has cleared.



If the child is still choking, alternate 5 back blows and 5 chest thrusts until emergency help arrives. If the **child becomes unconscious**, start [child CPR](#).

Choking prevention



Always follow the age recommendations on toys. Avoid toys with small parts, breakable parts, brittle surfaces or button batteries. Check toys for exposed stuffing and loose screws and buttons.



Get your child to sit while eating. Encourage your child to chew and swallow properly.



Your child is more likely to choke if they eat while lying down, running around or playing.