

CHOKING

Young children and babies are prone to choking. The most common cause of choking in this age group are food and small objects like buttons, beads and coins and small toys left lying about by older siblings. When an object is stuck in the throat it can block the airway, making breathing difficult, or the throat can go into a muscular spasm. If the airway is only partially blocked the casualty should be able to clear the blockage; if it is fully blocked, then the casualty will not be able to breathe, speak or cough and this will fast lead to unconsciousness so action must be prompt.

CHOKING CHILD

Your first aim is to try to encourage the child to cough as this could allow them to remove the obstruction themselves. However, if the child becomes weak or shows signs of difficulty in breathing, then we need to deliver one or all of the following techniques:

BACKSLAPS

Bend the child forward and using the heel of your hand, aim to deliver 5 sharp backslaps in the middle of the shoulder blades. Check the mouth to see if the obstruction is cleared and if you can see something in the mouth use a



one-finger sweeping action to remove it. Never go into the mouth blindly in case you push the obstruction further down the throat. If backslaps fail then try chest thrusts.

CHEST THRUSTS

Stand or kneel behind the child, placing your fist against the lower part of the breastbone. Take hold of your fist with the other hand and pull sharply inwards and upwards. Give up to 5 chest thrusts, checking the mouth again using the sweeping finger to remove any obstruction. If this fails try the abdominal thrusts.



ABDOMINAL THRUSTS

Place the thumb side of your fist between the naval and the ribcage. Roll your fist sharply in an "inwards and upwards" movement into the abdomen. Repeat this rolling technique 5 times. Check the mouth to see if the obstruction has cleared using the finger sweep action. If the obstruction is still not cleared repeat the backslaps, chest thrusts and abdominal thrusts up to 3 times more. Dial 999 for an ambulance and continue the above until the obstruction clears checking the level of response and be prepared to resuscitate if necessary.



CHOKING BABY

BACKSLAPS

Lay the baby face down along your forearm, supporting the head, with the head lower than the legs, and give up to 5 firm back slaps. Check the mouth and remove any obstruction with your fingertips.



CHEST THRUSTS

If the backslaps fail, turn the baby onto their back and give up to 5 chest thrusts. Using 2 fingers, one finger's breadth below the nipple line, push inwards and upwards on the breastbone. Perform the chest thrusts at a rate of one thrust every 3 seconds. Check the mouth.



If the obstruction is not cleared, carry out backslaps and chest thrusts a further 3 times. Never perform abdominal thrusts on a baby. Dial 999 for an ambulance and continue the backslaps/ chest thrusts until help arrives or the choke is removed. Check the level of response and be prepared to resuscitate if necessary.

How safe is your home?

Did you know, every year 1000s of children go to hospital after suffering an accidental injury at home. Help stop your child being one of them by following our safety tips check list:

- The stairs and landing are kept clear of clutter that could cause a fall.
- Toys for older children are kept away from babies and toddlers, in case they choke on small parts.
- Medicines and chemicals are kept high up and out of reach, to prevent a child from drinking something harmful.
- The highchair has a 5-point harness to stop babies climbing or falling out.
- Baby nappies are always changed on the floor, to help prevent falls.
- Babies and toddlers are always supervised in the bath, to prevent drowning.
- A smoke alarm is fitted and working to give the family extra time to escape in the event of a fire.
- Hot drinks are never left where young children can reach them, to prevent scalds, as a cup of tea is still hot enough to scald after 15 minutes.
- There are safety gates fitted to stop babies and toddlers climbing and falling.
- Plastic bags are knotted and put away safely to avoid suffocation.
- Cigarettes, matches and lighters are kept out of reach to prevent burns.
- Use back rings on the cooker or turn handles away from the edge to avoid scalds.
- Have a family fire escape plan worked out and discuss it with your children – don't wait until it is too late.
- Always replace dead batteries in your smoke alarm – you cannot replace your children.
- Have someone in the family take a first aid course to help cope if an accident happens.
- Ensure hair straighteners are NEVER left unattended, even when cooling down.

If you require more information on keeping safe, contact First & Foremost on 07889182031