

Choking

When a victim is choking, the airway leading to the lungs is obstructed, often by a piece of food that gets lodged in the airway. Young children and babies are particularly likely to choke on food or something they have put in their mouth. The victim may cough and gasp, get red in the face, have difficulty speaking, and get very distressed. Often, coughing alone is enough to clear the blockage; if it does not, first-aid measures are necessary to prevent loss of consciousness.

WARNING



Call 911 if:

- The person loses consciousness
- You cannot dislodge the blockage successfully using the steps on these pages



PRACTICAL TECHNIQUE

Dealing with choking (adults)

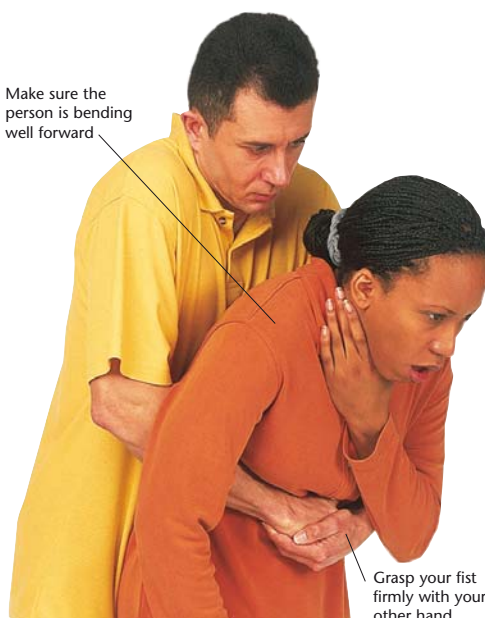
Your main goal is to clear the blockage from the victim's throat as quickly as possible.

CAUTION: Do not put your fingers in the victim's mouth or throat in an attempt to find any trapped object. If you can see an object, pick it out with your finger and thumb.

- 1 *If the victim is coughing, encourage him or her to keep doing this. If he or she has only a weak cough or stops breathing, stand behind the victim and put both arms around him or her. Make a fist and, with your knuckles facing upward and your thumb toward his or her abdomen, position your fist in the middle of the victim's abdomen, below the ribcage and above the navel.*



Make sure the person is bending well forward



- 2 *Grasp your fist with your other hand and pull sharply inward and upward to give abdominal thrusts. Give up to 5 abdominal thrusts, then check the victim's mouth to see if the blockage has been dislodged. Stop thrusts if the airway has been cleared; if not, give 3 further abdominal thrusts.*
- 3 *If after a further 3 abdominal thrusts, the blockage has not cleared, call 911, and continue to give thrusts until help arrives. If the victim becomes unconscious, get ready to perform CPR (see pp.170–171).*