



Central Health Board

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CHB NEWS BULLETIN



FIRST AID (A SERIES OF TUTORIALS)

Tutorial No. 4: Choking

Choking is the obstruction of an airway blocking air from reaching the lungs. Sometimes an object such as a piece of food can get stuck at the back of the throat and causing the person to choke. The obstruction needs to be cleared as quickly as possible to restore a clear airway to allow the person to breathe.

What is it?

A severe obstruction is when a person is unable to speak, cry, cough or breathe. A mild obstruction is when a person finds it difficult to breath, but is able to speak, cry, cough or breathe. Encouraging them to cough will enable them to clear the obstruction.

First aid aims:

- Relieve the obstruction
- Arrange for medical help if necessary

Action



Usually when an adult is choking they tend to grab their necks in what is a universally recognized sign that the person is choking.

If the obstruction is severe, the will be unable to speak, cry, cough or breathe. Or if it is a baby - the baby will turn blue in the face. Then immediately attempt the following;

Back blows - give up to 5 back blows



- Stand behind the person and support the person by placing your left arm around them.
- Give up to five blows between the shoulder blades with the heel of your hand.
- Check the mouth quickly after each one and remove any obvious obstruction.

Abdominal thrusts – give up to 5 abdominal thrusts

- If obstruction is still present after 5 back slaps, begin the Heimlich Manoeuvre i.e Abdominal thrusts.
- Place a clenched fist above the casualty's navel, grasp your fist with your other hand and **pull inwards and upwards**
- Check the mouth quickly after each one

If the Heimlich manoeuvre fails then go back to giving Back slaps followed by abdominal thrusts.

If obstruction does not clear after three cycles of back blows and abdominal thrusts, dial 112 (The Emergency number in Tanzania).

Continue until help arrives and resuscitate if necessary

If you have given someone abdominal thrusts ensure they are seen by a Doctor as there is a risk of internal damage



Choking in a Baby

The baby usually turns blue and is unable to cry in complete obstruction.



Turn the infant head down on your arm and give him 5 back slaps.

Check the mouth quickly after each slap and remove any obstruction noted.



If this fails then turn baby on to his back still in the head down position and give 5 chest thrusts using your fingers.

If after the chest thrusts the baby's airway is still blocked then repeat the back slaps. Repeat this for 3 cycles and then call **112** (The Emergency number in Tanzania).

Always take the baby to see a Doctor after the procedures described.

Once the baby or the adult has made a recovery and is unconscious then place him/her in the recovery position. (See Tutorial 3).

"Community's health – CHB's priority"