

Adult & child choking

ACTION CHECKLIST

If someone cannot speak, breathe or cough effectively, call emergency services. For a responsive adult or child, give 5 back blows followed by 5 abdominal thrusts, repeating until the blockage clears or they become unresponsive. Use chest thrusts when pregnant or when you cannot encircle the abdomen.

[] Assess the cough

If the person can cough effectively, encourage coughing and watch closely.

[] Call for help

Send someone to call emergency services, or use speakerphone without delaying care.

[] Give back blows and thrusts

Lean them forward for 5 back blows between shoulder blades, then give 5 abdominal thrusts; follow dispatcher guidance.

[] If unresponsive

Lower them safely and start CPR as directed. Remove only a clearly visible object; never blindly sweep the mouth.

WATCH FOR

Do not use abdominal thrusts on an infant under one year; infant care uses back blows and chest thrusts.

IF HELP IS UNAVAILABLE

Begin the first-aid sequence immediately while another person calls if possible. If the person becomes unresponsive, lower them safely and begin CPR. Look for a visible object before breaths; never sweep blindly inside the mouth. A delayed ambulance is not a reason to delay first aid.

Updated 2026-10-02 | Civilian educational guidance. Seek qualified help when reachable and safe; do not delay immediate protective action.

Full guide: <https://ospreyzero.com/emergencies/choking/>

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