

## CHOKING EDUCATION

Choking happens when an object lodges in the throat or windpipe blocking the flow of air. In adults, a piece of food is usually to blame. Young children often choke on small objects. Choking is life-threatening. It cuts off oxygen to the brain.

### HOW CAN I PREVENT CHOKING?

You can help prevent choking with these safety measures:

- Cut food into small pieces.
- Chew food slowly and thoroughly, especially if wearing dentures.
- Don't laugh and talk while chewing and swallowing.
- Don't drink lots of alcohol before and during meals.

You can prevent choking in children with these safety measures:

- Keep marbles, beads, thumbtacks, latex balloons, coins, and other small toys and objects out of reach, particularly in children younger than 4 years old.
- Prevent children from walking, running, or playing when they have food and toys in their mouth.
- Don't feed children younger than age 4 foods that can easily get lodged in the throat. This includes hot dogs, nuts, chunks of meat or cheese, grapes, hard or sticky candy, popcorn, chunks of peanut butter, or raw carrots.
- Supervise mealtimes with young children.
- Prevent older siblings from giving a dangerous food or toy to a young child.



### WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE WHEN SOMEONE IS CHOKING?

- One or both hands clutched to the throat.
- A look of panic, shock or confusion.
- Inability to talk.
- Strained, noisy, or squeaky sounds when trying to breathe. Cough, which may be weak or forceful.
- Skin, lips & nails turning blue or gray.
- Loss of consciousness

### IF YOU'RE ALONE AND CHOKING:

Call 911 or your local emergency number right away. Then, give yourself abdominal thrusts, also called the Heimlich maneuver, to remove the stuck object.

- Place a fist slightly above your navel.
- Grasp your fist with the other hand.
- Bend over a countertop or chair, or hard surface
- Shove your fist inward and upward.

### WHAT DO I DO IF I THINK SOMEONE MIGHT BE CHOKING?

Give first aid as quickly as possible if you or someone else is choking. To prepare yourself for these situations, learn the Heimlich maneuver and CPR in a certified first-aid training course.

### WHEN SHOULD I SEEK EMERGENCY SUPPORT?

If you're the only rescuer, give back blows and abdominal thrusts first. Then call 911 or your local emergency number for help. If another person is there, have that person call for help while you give first aid.

If you're alone and choking, call 911 or your local emergency number right away. Then, give yourself abdominal thrusts, also called the Heimlich maneuver, to remove the stuck object.

**Contact your Care Manager for concerns regarding your loved one.**

# FIRST AID FOR CHOKING



**You must act if there are any signs that a person can't speak, breathe or cough.**

## **SIGNS**

- Universal choking sign
- Person cannot breathe, cough or speak
- Person makes high pitched sounds when breathing
- Lips and finger nails may become blue

**Ask, “Are you choking?”** If the person gestures yes, stand behind the person, wrapping your arms around the person's waist.



**Make a fist with one hand**



**hold it with the other hand against the person's abdomen**



**between the navel and lower end of breast bone**

Provide quick, upward and inward abdominal thrusts (Heimlich maneuver) until the food or object is forced out.

## **If the person becomes unresponsive,**

- Call 911 or local EMS  
Telephone \_\_\_\_\_
- Return to the person
- Lay the person flat on his or her back
- Open his or her mouth
- Remove the object if you see it



**If the object is not seen:**

- Tilt his or her head back
- Begin CPR
- Look for the object each time you open the airway
- Look for the object in the mouth every 1–2 minutes.



**Department of Health**