

## How to avoid choking

Follow these common-sense preventive measures:

### Children:

1. Take care that infants and toddlers do not put large pieces of food in their mouths.
2. Cut or break solid food into bite-sized pieces and encourage children to chew thoroughly from a very early age.
3. Encourage children to be still while eating. Food or candy might be inhaled if the child gets excited or trips while walking or running.

### Adults:

1. Have ill-fitting dentures repaired or replaced. If chewing teeth are missing, get dentures in order to restore normal chewing capability.
2. Don't gulp huge pieces of food just to keep up with other diners. If your mouth is sore and chewing is difficult, cut food into tiny bites that are easy to swallow.
3. Drinking alcoholic beverages will greatly increase the possibility of choking for all people. If you have lost chewing capability, be especially wary of drinking before eating.

In all cases, the victim of a choking accident should receive prompt medical attention following the emergency.

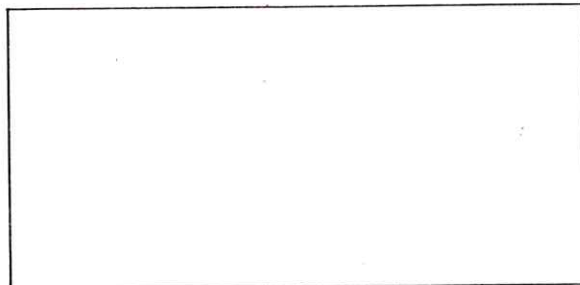
The procedures described in this brochure apply only to food choking accidents.

For training in procedures for handling other forms of choking, heart attack, stroke, fainting and other emergencies, consult the nearest office of the Red Cross or the American Heart Association.

## Someone's choking! Here's what to do:

If a diner, child or adult, suddenly becomes quiet and shows signs of distress, immediately do these things:

- Send for help, but don't wait for it to arrive.
- Ask the victim if he can talk. If he can't he's probably choking.
- Strike the victim several times between the shoulder blades with the heel of your hand.
- If this fails, use the Heimlich Maneuver. Wrap your arms around the victim's waist from behind.
- Make a fist with one hand and place it, thumb side against the abdomen, between the navel and rib cage.
- Clasp the fist with your free hand and press in with a quick upward thrust. Repeat several times if necessary.
- When the obstruction is out, administer mouth-to-mouth breathing.
- Keep the victim warm and quiet. Seek medical attention.



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# Thousands of children and adults will die by choking in the next 12 months.



## Most can be saved.

Choking on food is the sixth-leading cause of accidental death in the U.S. Annually, more people die by choking than are killed by firearms or aircraft accidents, poisonous snake bites, lightning or electric shock. These needless deaths can be prevented. Please take a few minutes to learn how to recognize the symptoms and the few simple steps necessary to save a life.

## How it happens

When a piece of food, usually meat, lodges in the throat so that it prevents breathing, the victim has just four minutes before he will suffer permanent brain damage from lack of oxygen. In less than four more minutes he will be dead from asphyxiation.

Among infants, choking leads all causes of accidental death. This is due to a lack of chewing capability and a natural inclination to put food and objects of all sizes into their mouths.

Toddlers and older children choke because they do not chew properly. Or they inhale food or objects in their mouths while playing. The most common causes among adults are:

- Difficulty in chewing because of missing teeth or loose-fitting dentures that make chewing a slow, painful process. The victim frequently gulps huge pieces of unchewed meat.
- Enough alcoholic intake to affect judgment and to numb the senses of the throat and swallowing mechanisms.

## How to recognize choking

The first sign of choking is when a person suddenly becomes quiet and a look of alarm comes over his face. He may clutch at his chest or throat and attempt to rise. A person exhibiting these signs must not leave the table alone. In a few moments he may collapse and he cannot save himself.

Diners in restaurants often mistake the cause of a victim's collapse as stroke or heart attack. That is why a fatal choking accident is sometimes called a "cafe coronary."

Stroke and heart attack victims, if they are conscious, can usually breathe and talk. A choking victim is unable to breathe or make a sound.

Soon after these first symptoms appear he will start to turn blue and lose consciousness. He is now just minutes from a preventable death.

## How to save a choking victim

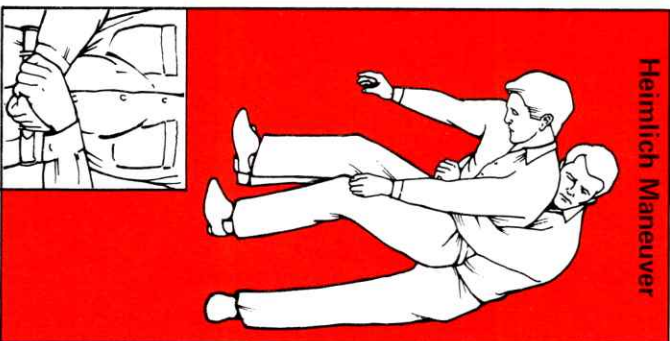
Treatment must be immediate, if the victim is to survive. Send someone for help but don't wait for it to arrive. Follow these steps:

### If the victim is conscious:

1. Ask the victim if he can talk. If he can talk and cough effectively, do not interfere with his attempts to clear his throat. If he is unable to make a sound, he is probably choking.
2. Strike the victim sharply, several times in rapid succession, between the shoulder blades with the heel of your hand.
3. If the throat remains blocked, use the Heimlich Maneuver. With the victim standing or sitting, wrap

your arms around his waist from behind. Make a fist with one hand and place it, thumb side against the abdomen, between the navel and rib cage.

4. Clasp the fist with your free hand and press in with a quick upward thrust. Repeat several times, if necessary.
5. If unsuccessful, repeat blows to the back and the Heimlich Maneuver. If the victim loses consciousness, continue with treatment for an unconscious victim.



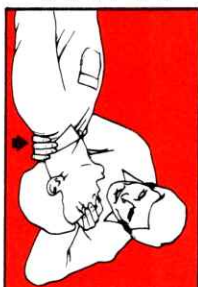
*These measures may be used on children and adults. Infants and small children should be held upside down, over the arm of the rescuer, and then struck between the shoulder blades.*

*If you choke while alone, press your own fist into the abdomen with a quick upward thrust, or press your abdomen quickly over the back of a chair, or against the edge of a sink, railing or counter top.*

### If the victim is unconscious:

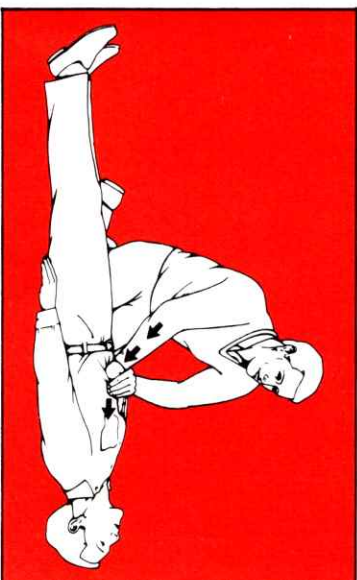
If the cause is unknown, try first to restore breathing using the mouth-to-mouth technique:

Lift the neck and push the head back. Pinch the nostrils shut, keeping the neck up. Make a tight seal with your mouth around the victim's mouth and blow into the victim's mouth.



If the chest does not rise, treat for choking as follows:

1. Roll the victim on his side, bracing his chest against your knee. Strike him sharply, several times in rapid succession, between the shoulder blades with the heel of your hand.
2. Remove any foreign matter from the mouth and begin mouth-to-mouth breathing.
3. If unsuccessful, kneel close beside the victim's hips and place the heel of one hand on the center of the abdomen, slightly above the navel and below the rib cage. Place your free hand on top of the other.



4. Press in toward the center with a quick upward thrust. Do not press to either side. Repeat several times if necessary.
5. If vomiting occurs, quickly turn the victim's head to one side. Clear the mouth and begin mouth-to-mouth breathing.
6. If the airway remains blocked, attempt to remove the object with your index finger, using a hooking motion across the back of the throat.
7. Repeat attempts to restore breathing, back blows, abdominal thrusts and finger probes until the obstruction is removed. Then use the mouth-to-mouth method to help the victim resume normal breathing.