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## **Suffocation by choking**

- When an adult suffocates by choking it usually happens during a meal when food gets stuck in the throat. The victim could have difficulty breathing, or even pass out. The first thing to do is to lean the victim slightly forward and give them five slaps with the palm of your hand between the two shoulder blades, in order to make them cough. If the person is unable to cough up the object, call emergency services right away.

If the victim is more than a year old, administer abdominal thrusts, what we call the Heimlich Manoeuvre. Stand behind the person and wrap your arms around the waist. Make a fist and place it above the navel, but below the rib cage. Grasp your fist with your other hand, press your fist into the person's abdomen and give quick upward thrusts.

After each thrust, check to see if the person is breathing better or if the object has been expelled. If after five thrusts the object has still not been expelled, alternate again with slaps on the back.

If the person becomes unconscious, lie them on a flat, hard floor. Check the airway is clear and administer thirty chest compressions.

Place the heel of your hand in the middle of the person's chest. Put your other hand on top of the first. Press hard in order to push in the chest about one and a half to two inches. Allow the chest to recoil before the next compression. Compress the chest at a rate of two compressions per second.

Once rescued, the person should see a doctor as soon as possible.

For a baby less than a year old, here is what to do.

Put the baby on your knees, lie him stomach down and along your forearm. The baby's head should be lower than his chest to facilitate expulsion of the object.

Hold the baby's head without pressing on the throat.

Give the baby five slaps on the back between the shoulder blades.

If this doesn't work, place the baby on his back along your arm. Administer chest compressions with two fingers. Place the pads of two fingers just below an imaginary line running between the baby's nipples. Give five chest thrusts and then check the baby's mouth to see if the object has been spit up. If so, remove it gently.

If not, alternate back slaps and chest compressions until the emergency services arrive.

If the baby becomes unconscious, administer chest compressions immediately.

To prevent choking, don't forget that a safe meal is a meal eaten slowly. Take small bites and chew food thoroughly before swallowing, especially if you're eating tough, firm food.