

FIRST AID FACT SHEET

Choking Adult / Child (over 1 year)

Choking is severe difficulty when breathing due to a mild or severe obstruction of the airway due to a foreign body.

Caused by

- + Airway partially or completely blocked by food.
- + Airway partially or completely blocked by small objects or foreign materials.
- + Eating too quickly.
- + Not chewing food sufficiently.

Signs & symptoms

- + Clutching the throat.
- + Coughing, wheezing or gagging.
- + Having difficulty breathing, unable to breathe, coughing, speaking or swallowing.
- + Trying to cry but making strange or no sounds at all.
- + Making whistling or “crowing” sounds.
- + Face, neck, lips, ears or fingernails turning blue.
- + Collapsing or becoming unresponsive.

What to do

1. Follow DRSABCD St John Action Plan.
2. Encourage the casualty to relax, breathe deeply and encourage coughing to remove object and observe for any deterioration.
3. If coughing is unsuccessful in removing the object, call **Triple Zero (000)** for an ambulance.

If the casualty is conscious

4. Position the casualty leaning forward with their head and chest low and give up to five (5) sharp back blows between the shoulder blades with heel of one hand.
5. Check after each back blow to see if the obstruction has been cleared.
6. If unsuccessful, give up to five (5) chest thrusts:
 - + Use the heel of the hand on the breastbone.
 - + Place other hand flat between the shoulder blades to support the casualty and deliver up to five (5) chest thrusts. Chest thrusts are similar to chest compressions but sharper and delivered at a slower rate.
 - + Check to see if the obstruction has cleared after each thrust.
7. If obstruction does not clear continue alternating with five (5) back blows and five (5) chest thrusts until medical aid arrives.

If the casualty becomes unresponsive

1. Commence CPR.
2. Call **Triple Zero (000)** for an ambulance.



In a medical emergency
call **Triple Zero (000)**

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