

First Aid: Rescue Breathing



Rescue breathing is needed if a person collapses and stops breathing.

This sheet is intended for helping people who have stopped breathing but whose heart is still beating (they have a pulse). If the person is not breathing and does not have a pulse, start CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). In CPR, rescue breathing may also follow chest compressions if the person's heart is not beating.

The information in this sheet gives you the basics of rescue breathing. It's not intended to take the place of CPR training.

A person may need rescue breathing in the following situations:

- Near drowning
- Overdose or poisoning
- Choking
- Carbon monoxide poisoning
- Severe asthma attack

By breathing into another person's lungs (rescue breathing), you can supply enough oxygen to preserve life. Act quickly, because brain damage can occur after only 3 minutes without oxygen.

- If the person is a baby or child (age 1 to puberty) and they are not breathing but has a pulse, give 1 rescue breath every 2 to 3 seconds or about 20 to 30 breaths per minute.
- In adults, call 911 first and do the following:
 - If the person is not breathing but has a pulse, give 1 rescue breath every 5 to 6 seconds or about 10 to 12 breaths per minute.
- If the person does not have a pulse, begin CPR if you are trained to do so. If you are alone, not trained in CPR, and a phone is nearby, call 911.

Protective face mask

You may use a protective face mask. Follow the directions that came with the mask.

Step 1. Open the airway

- Place the victim on their back.
- Press your palm against the person's forehead. At the same time, hook your fingers under the chin and lift it away from the spine, as if pulling out a drawer. This tilts the head back and opens the airway.
- If there is a possibility of a head, neck, or spine injury, place the victim on their back without moving the neck or chin.

Step 2. Check for breathing and a pulse

- Look to see if the chest is rising.

- Listen for normal breathing (not gasping for air).
- Check for a pulse.
- If there is no normal breathing and the person has a pulse, start mouth-to-mouth breathing as described in Steps 3 to 5.

Step 3. Pinch and seal

- Adults and children (age 1 to puberty):
 - Keep the head tilted back and chin up
 - Pinch the victim's nostrils together with your thumb and first finger. Or follow your face mask directions.
 - If you don't have a protective barrier, seal your lips over the victim's open mouth.
 - Note: If the victim's mouth can't be opened, you can seal your lips over the victim's nose.
- Babies (up to age 1):
 - Cover the baby's nose and mouth with your mouth or a protective barrier.

Step 4. Provide a rescue breath

- Adults and children (age 1 to puberty):
 - Breathe into the victim's mouth for 1 second. Watch for the chest to rise.
 - If the chest rises, air is entering the person's lungs.
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- Babies (up to age 1):
 - Give 2 gentle puffs or breaths of air instead of a deep breath. Each puff should last 1 second.
 - If the chest rises, breathe a gentle puff or breathe into the victim's mouth a second time.
 - If the chest doesn't rise, tilt the victim's head back and chin up again. Then breathe into the victim's mouth a second time.
 - If the chest still doesn't rise, check inside the mouth for a foreign object after chest compressions. **If an object is visible**, sweep the mouth with your fingers and remove the object. Take care not to push the object further into the throat. Never do a blind finger sweep in a person's mouth.

Step 5. Give more breaths

- Adults and children (ages 1 to puberty):
 - Continue to give 1 rescue breath every 5 to 6 seconds, or about 10 to 12 breaths per minute, until the person starts breathing or emergency medical services arrive.
 - Check for a pulse every 2 minutes. If you do not feel a pulse, begin CPR if you are trained to do so.
- Babies (up to age 1):

- Give 2 breaths after 30 chest compressions until the infant starts breathing or emergency medical services arrive.

It is best to be prepared in the event of an emergency. Look for classes offered by your local hospital, the American Heart Association, or the American Red Cross in your area or on the Internet.

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