

Choking infant (under 1 year)

FIRST AID FACT SHEET

How to respond to a choking infant (under 1 year)

Choking is severe difficulty when breathing due to a mild or severe obstruction of the airway due to a foreign body. An infant's airways are smaller and can be more prone to blockage.

What to do

1. Immediately call **Triple Zero (000)** for an ambulance.
2. Follow DRSABCD St John Action Plan (<https://stjohnwa.com.au/online-resources/first-aid-information-and-resources/drsabcd-action-plan>).

If the infant is conscious

1. Give up to five (5) sharp back blows:
 - + Position infant with head and shoulders on your hand and forearm facing downwards.
 - + Hold the infant's mouth open with your fingers.
 - + Give up to five (5) sharp blows between shoulders with the heel of one hand.
 - + Visually check if the obstruction has been cleared after each back blow and remove any foreign material that may have loosened.
2. If unsuccessful, give up to five (5) chest thrusts:
 - + Place the infant on their back on a firm surface.
 - + Place two (2) fingers (index and middle) over the lower half of the breastbone.
 - + Give five (5) chest thrusts – which are similar to CPR compressions but sharper and delivered at a slower rate.
 - + Visually check if the obstruction has been cleared after each chest thrust.
3. If obstruction cleared, position the infant with the head pointing downwards on the forearm, and remove any foreign material that may have loosened carefully with your little finger.
4. If the obstruction does not clear continue alternating with five (5) back blows and five (5) chest thrusts until medical aid arrives.

If the infant becomes unconscious and not breathing normally

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

Signs and 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

Becoming unconscious.

Caused by

Airway partially or completely blocked by food

Airway partially or completely blocked by small objects or foreign materials

Learn more about infant and baby first aid in St John WA's [Tiny Tots first aid course](https://stjohnwa.com.au/first-aid-training/first-aid-courses/tiny-tots) (<https://stjohnwa.com.au/first-aid-training/first-aid-courses/tiny-tots>).