

Choking adult or child

FIRST AID FACT SHEET

How respond to a choking adult or child

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

What to do

1. Follow DRSABCD St John Action Plan (<https://stjohnwa.com.au/online-resources/first-aid-information-and-resources/drsabcd-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

1. 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 the heel of one hand.
2. Visually check after each back blow to see if the obstruction has been cleared.
3. If unsuccessful, give up to five (5) chest thrusts:
 - + Use the heel of the hand on the breastbone.
 - + Place the 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.
 - + Visually check to see if the obstruction has cleared after each thrust.
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 casualty becomes unconscious and is not breathing normally

1. Commence CPR and defibrillation
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

Collapsing or becoming unconscious.

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.