



Home → Health Topics → Choking

URL of this page: <https://medlineplus.gov/choking.html>

## Choking

Food or small objects can cause choking if they get caught in your throat and block your airway. This keeps oxygen from getting to your lungs and brain. If your brain goes without oxygen for more than four minutes, you could have brain damage or die.

Young children are at an especially high risk of choking. They can choke on foods like hot dogs, nuts and grapes, and on small objects like toy pieces and coins. Keep hazards out of their reach and supervise them when they eat.

When someone is choking, quick action can be lifesaving. Learn how to do back blows, the Heimlich maneuver (abdominal thrusts), and CPR [<https://medlineplus.gov/cpr.html>] .

## Start Here

- Choking -- Heimlich Maneuver [<https://www.emergencyphysicians.org/article/health--safety-tips/choking--heimlich-manuever>] (American College of Emergency Physicians)
- Choking Prevention and Rescue Tips [<https://www.nsc.org/community-safety/safety-topics/choking>] (National Safety Council)
- Choking: First Aid [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid/first-aid-choking/basics/ART-20056637?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/first-aid/first-aid-choking/basics/art-20056637?p=1>]

## Prevention and Risk Factors

- Choking and Strangulation Prevention Tips [<https://www.safekids.org/tip/choking-and-strangulation-prevention-tips>] (Safe Kids Worldwide)
- Choking Prevention [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/Choking-Prevention.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/paginas/choking-prevention.aspx>]
- Choosing Safe Toys [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/safe-toys.html>] (Nemours Foundation)
- Household Safety: Preventing Choking [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/safety-choking.html>] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/safety-choking.html>]

## Treatments and Therapies

- Adult First Aid/CPR/AED Ready Reference [[https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/training-services/no-index/Adult\\_RRC.pdf](https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/training-services/no-index/Adult_RRC.pdf)] (American Red Cross) - PDF
- Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR): First Aid [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/first-aid/first-aid-cpr/basics/ART-20056600?p=1>] (Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.mayoclinic.org/es/first-aid/first-aid-cpr/basics/art-20056600?p=1>]
- CPR for a Baby or Child [<https://www.redcross.org/take-a-class/cpr/performing-cpr/child-baby-cpr>] (American Red Cross)
- CPR for Infants and Children [<https://www.emergencyphysicians.org/article/pediatrics/cpr-for-children>] (American College of Emergency Physicians)

- Emergency airway puncture - series [[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100113\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100113_1.htm)] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [[https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp\\_presentations/100113\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100113_1.htm)]
- Pediatric First Aid/CPR/AED Ready Reference [[https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/training-services/no-index/Pediatric\\_RRC.pdf](https://www.redcross.org/content/dam/redcross/training-services/no-index/Pediatric_RRC.pdf)] (American Red Cross) - **PDF**
- Responding to a Choking Emergency [<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/Pages/Responding-to-a-Choking-Emergency.aspx>] (American Academy of Pediatrics)  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.healthychildren.org/spanish/health-issues/injuries-emergencies/paginas/responding-to-a-choking-emergency.aspx>]
- What to Do About Choking [<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/choking-sheet.html>] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/parents/choking-sheet.html>]

## Images

- Choking first aid - adult or child over 1 year - series [[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100222\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100222_1.htm)] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [[https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp\\_presentations/100222\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100222_1.htm)]
- Choking first aid - infant under 1 year - series -- Part 1 [[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100221\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100221_1.htm)] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [[https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp\\_presentations/100221\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/esp_presentations/100221_1.htm)]

## Journal Articles

References and abstracts from MEDLINE/PubMed (National Library of Medicine)

- Article: Airway ultrasound in pediatric patients with stridor and extubation failure.  
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40706076>]
- Article: A beginner's guide to using personalised three-dimensional airway stents.  
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40701640>]
- Article: Bronchoscopic Management of Central Airway Obstruction in Children after Heart Surgery.  
[<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/40578812>]
- Choking -- see more articles [<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/?term=%22Airway+Obstruction%22%5Bmajr%3Aexp%5D+AND+humans%5Bmh%5D+AND+english%5Bla%5D+AND+%22last+1+Year%22+%5Bdat%5D+NOT+%28letter%5Bpt%5D+OR+case+reports%5Bpt%5D+OR+editorial%5Bpt%5D+OR+comment%5Bpt%5D%29+AND+free+full+text%5Bsb%5D+>]

## Find an Expert

- American Red Cross [<https://www.redcross.org/>]  
Also in Spanish [<https://www.redcross.org/cruz-roja.html>]

## Children

- CPR: A Real Lifesaver (For Kids) [<https://kidshealth.org/en/kids/cpr.html>] (Nemours Foundation)  
Also in Spanish [<https://kidshealth.org/es/kids/cpr.html>]

## Patient Handouts

- Blockage of upper airway [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000067.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000067.htm>]
- Choking - unconscious adult or child over 1 year [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000051.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000051.htm>]
- Foreign object - inhaled or swallowed [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000036.htm>] (Medical Encyclopedia)  
Also in Spanish [<https://medlineplus.gov/spanish/ency/article/000036.htm>]



## MEDICAL ENCYCLOPEDIA

Abdominal thrusts [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000047.htm>]

Blockage of upper airway [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000067.htm>]

Choking - adult or child over 1 year [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000049.htm>]

Choking - infant under 1 year [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000048.htm>]

Choking - unconscious adult or child over 1 year [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000051.htm>]

Choking first aid - adult or child over 1 year - series [[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100222\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100222_1.htm)]

Choking first aid - infant under 1 year - series -- Part 1 [[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100221\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100221_1.htm)]

Emergency airway puncture [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/003017.htm>]

Emergency airway puncture - series [[https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100113\\_1.htm](https://medlineplus.gov/ency/presentations/100113_1.htm)]

Foreign object - inhaled or swallowed [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000036.htm>]

Heimlich maneuver on self [<https://medlineplus.gov/ency/article/001983.htm>]

## Related Health Topics

Foreign Bodies [<https://medlineplus.gov/foreignbodies.html>]

MedlinePlus links to health information from the National Institutes of Health and other federal government agencies.

MedlinePlus also links to health information from non-government Web sites. See our [disclaimer](#)

[<https://medlineplus.gov/disclaimers.html>] about external links and our [quality guidelines](#)

[<https://medlineplus.gov/criteria.html>] .

The information on this site should not be used as a substitute for professional medical care or advice. Contact a health care provider if you have questions about your health.

[Learn how to cite this page](#)