

First Aid for the Choking Infant*

The following procedure- or the Heimlich maneuver in older children- should be initiated only when aspiration of a foreign body is witnessed or strongly suspected or when the child is unconscious, not breathing, and unresponsive to the usual maneuvers to clear the airway. If an infection, such as croup or epiglottitis, is the suspected cause of obstruction, the child should be taken immediately to an advanced life support facility.

1. Straddle the baby over your forearm at a 60 degree angle with the head lower than the trunk. Support the head by firmly holding the jaw. This position compresses the chest against the forearm, promotes an artificial cough, increases pressure within the chest, and allows gravity to aid in removing the foreign object.
2. Rest your forearm on your thigh and deliver five forceful blows between the infant's shoulder blades with the heel of your free hand.
3. Rest your hand on the infant's back so that he is sandwiched between your hands. The hand on the front should support the head, jaw, and chest.
4. While supporting the head and neck, turn the infant on your thigh and place him with his head lower than his trunk.
5. Place two fingers on the infant's chest in the same location as for external chest compression and deliver five chest thrusts, similar to chest compressions, but at a slower rate.
6. In the unconscious infant, following back blows and chest thrusts, open the mouth by grasping the tongue and lower jaw between your thumb and finger and lifting. This tongue-jaw lift may help clear the airway by pulling the tongue away from the back of the throat. If you can see the obstructing object, remove it with a finger sweep. Avoid blind finger sweeps in infants and young children, as this may push the foreign body back into the airway.

7. If the baby still does not breathe spontaneously, administer two slow breaths by the mouth-to-mouth or mouth-to-mouth-and-nose method. Keep repeating the sequence until emergency medical services are available.

The following alternate method can be used by rescuers who find it physically difficult to position an infant over the forearm:

1. Lay the infant face down on your lap with his head lower than his trunk. Firmly support the head.
2. Deliver five back blows.
3. Turn the infant to the supine position and perform the chest thrusts.

