

## Choking child (1 to 8 years)

### How can I prevent choking?

Choking is most common in children younger than 5 years. Cut up their food into small pieces, and be sure to watch them closely when eating. Do not allow them to have food or small objects in their mouth while running, talking, crying, or laughing. Some common things children choke on include:

- buttons, coins
- grapes, raw carrots
- hot dogs
- hard candy, peanuts, popcorn
- latex balloons
- small toys or pieces of toys

### What are the signs of choking?

- child clutches his or her neck
- high-pitched noisy breathing
- cough is very quiet
- cannot talk or make sounds
- color changes from red to purple to blue
- cannot breathe

### What should I do?

Ask, “Are you choking?” If child nods yes, say you’re going to help. Follow these steps, until the object comes out and the child can breathe, cough, or talk, or does not respond.

#### Abdominal thrusts (Heimlich maneuver):

1. Stand or kneel behind the child and put your arms under his or her arms.

2. Put the thumb-side of your fist against the child’s abdomen (belly) just above the belly button. Put your other hand over your fist.



3. Press into the abdomen with quick inward and upward thrusts.

### If the child does not respond

1. Yell, “**Help - call 911!**”
2. Do CPR, but each time you open the airway to give breaths, look for an object in the mouth. If you see something, remove it. If nothing is seen, **do not put your fingers in the mouth.**
3. Continue CPR until the child responds, or trained help takes over.

### Important

This sheet is a review of techniques taught in a class on managing choking. It is not complete in itself. You must practice these techniques on a manikin with an instructor. **Do not** practice techniques on a person.