

# First Aid: Choking



## Common Hazards & Safety Tips

- Certain foods like nuts, apple, popcorn, lollies, and grapes can present a choking hazard. Ensure young children are seated and not left alone whilst eating.
- Food preparation is important. Ensure hard fruit and vegetables are cooked, mashed, peeled, or grated. Cut grapes into quarters.
- Do not leave baby alone with a bottle.
- Check labels and keep young children away from toys that are not age appropriate.
- Needles, safety pins, buttons, marbles, coins, and other small objects can choke a child under 3 years of age. Ensure these are stored out of reach of babies and young children.
- Button batteries can be found in toys, remote controls, watches, thermometers, and other household items – keep these items in a safe place out of reach of young children.



## Choking First Aid: Children (over 1 year old)

### What does choking look like?

- Partial Obstruction: coughing, wheezing, gagging, agitation.
- Complete Obstruction: blue lips or face, loss of consciousness, child cannot make any sounds.

### Is the child choking and still breathing?

- This is a PARTIAL OBSTRUCTION. Encourage them to cough. Stay with the child and reassure them. If the cough becomes ineffective or the child deteriorates, call triple 000 and follow instructions.

### Is the child choking and not breathing?

- This is a COMPLETE OBSTRUCTION. If the child does not have an effective cough, or stops breathing at any time, call Triple Zero (000).
- Encourage the child to lean forward if they are able, or lay on the floor in the recovery position. Give 5 sharp back blows using the heel of your hand between their shoulder blades. In between each back blow, check to see if the object has been dislodged and if the child is breathing.
- If the back blows are unsuccessful, turn the child onto their back. Give 5 chest thrusts using the heel of your hand, keeping fingers in contact with the chest at all times, over the same area you would use for chest compressions. After each chest thrust, check to see if the object has been dislodged.
- If the object has not been dislodged, continue alternating between 5 back blows and 5 chest thrusts as above, until the ambulance arrives.
- If the child becomes unconscious at any time, call Triple Zero (000) and commence CPR.

## More Information:

- Royal Children's Hospital (Kids Health Information Fact Sheets): [www.rch.org.au](http://www.rch.org.au)
- Kidsafe Victoria: [www.kidsafevic.com.au](http://www.kidsafevic.com.au)
- Learn these skills by booking into a first aid course: [www.emergcare.com.au](http://www.emergcare.com.au)



This information is not a substitute for first aid training or medical advice. Whilst all care has been taken in preparing this information, Emergcare takes no responsibility for its use by other parties or individuals, and recommends attending a first aid course.