

CHOKING INFANT UNDER ONE YEAR

CAUTION

- If at any stage the infant becomes unresponsive, open the airway and check breathing (pp.80–81). If the infant is not breathing, begin CPR (pp.82–83) to try to relieve the obstruction.

RECOGNITION

Mild obstruction:

- Infant able to cough, but has difficulty crying or making any other noise

Severe obstruction:

- Unable to make any noise or breathe, and eventually becomes unresponsive

YOUR AIMS

- To remove the obstruction
- To arrange urgent removal to hospital if necessary

An infant is more likely to choke on food or small objects than an adult. The infant will rapidly become distressed, and you need to act quickly to clear any obstruction. If the infant becomes unresponsive, the throat muscles may relax and the airway may open enough to do rescue breathing. Be prepared to begin rescue breaths and chest compressions.

WHAT TO DO

- 1 If the infant is unable to cry, cough or breathe, lay her face down along your forearm and thigh and support her head. Give up to five back blows between the shoulder blades, with the heel of your hand.



- 2 Turn the infant over so that she is face up along your other leg and check her mouth. Remove any obvious obstructions with your fingertips. Do not sweep the mouth with your finger as this may push the object further down the throat.



- 3 If back blows fail to clear the obstruction, try chest thrusts. These are similar to chest compressions, but sharper in nature and delivered at a slower rate. Lay the infant face up on your leg, place two fingers on the lower part of the breastbone one finger's breadth below the nipple line and push downwards. Give up to five chest thrusts.



- 4 Check the mouth. If the obstruction still has not cleared, call 999/112 for emergency help; take the infant with you if necessary.
- 5 Repeat steps 1 to 3 – rechecking the mouth after each step – until help arrives or the infant becomes unresponsive (see CAUTION, above left).

HANGING AND ST

If pressure is exerted on the outside of the neck, the neck is squeezed and the flow of air to the lungs is blocked. Causes of such pressure are:

- **Hanging** – suspension of the body by a cord or rope around the neck.
- **Strangulation** – constriction or squeezing of the neck or throat.

Sometimes, hanging or strangulation may occur, for example, by ties or clothing becoming caught around the neck. Hanging may cause a broken neck; for this reason, this situation must be handled extremely carefully.

WHAT TO DO



- 1 Quick removal of the cause is essential.
- 2 If the victim is conscious, you should reassure them and be aware of their heavy breathing.
- 3 If the victim is unconscious, help them to lie on their back and support their head.
- 4 Call 999/112 for help. Recover the victim's vital signs and level of consciousness – until help arrives.