

Choking

Act immediately and calmly

Children, particularly between the ages of about one and five, often put objects in their mouth. This is a normal part of how they explore the world. Some small objects, like marbles and beads, are just the right size to get stuck in a child's airway and cause choking. The best way to avoid this is to make sure small objects like these are out of your child's reach.

In most cases you, or someone else, will see your child swallow the object that causes the choking. However, there can be other reasons for coughing. If your child suddenly starts coughing, is not ill and often tries to put small objects in their mouth, then there is a good chance that they are choking.

If your child is still conscious but either they are not coughing or their coughing is not effective, use back blows. If back blows don't relieve the choking, and your child is still conscious, give chest thrusts to infants under one year or abdominal thrusts to children over one year. Even if it is expelled, get medical help.

Unconscious child with choking:

If a choking child is, or becomes unconscious, put them on a firm flat surface.

- Call out or send for help. Call 999.
- Don't leave the child at this stage.
- Open the child's mouth. If the object is clearly visible, and you can grasp it easily, remove it.
- Start cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR). Visit www.redcrossfirstaidtraining.co.uk.

If your child is choking:

- If you can see the object, try to remove it. But do not poke blindly with your fingers. You could make things worse by pushing the object in further.
- If your child is coughing loudly, there is no need to do anything. Encourage them to carry on coughing and don't leave them.
- If your child's coughing is not effective (it's silent or they cannot breathe in properly), shout for help immediately and decide whether they are still conscious. **Call 999.**
- If your child is still conscious but either they are not coughing or their coughing is not effective, use back blows.

Health visitor says

Babies and toddlers can easily swallow, inhale or choke on small items like lolly sticks, balloons, peanuts, buttons, nappy sacks, plastic toy pieces or cords. Is your baby's environment safe?