

What to do in the event of choking as advised by NHS direct:

Mild choking: encourage them to cough

If the airway is only partly blocked, the person will usually be able to speak, cry, cough or breathe. They will usually be able to clear the blockage themselves.

1. Encourage the person to keep coughing to try and clear the blockage.
2. Ask the person to try to spit out the object if it's in their mouth.
3. Don't put your fingers in their mouth to help them as they may bite you accidentally.
4. If coughing doesn't work, start back blows (see below).

Severe choking: back blows and abdominal thrusts

Where choking is severe, the person will not be able to speak, cry, cough or breathe. Without help, they will eventually become unconscious.

1. Stand behind the person and slightly to one side. Support their chest with one hand. Lean the person forward so that the object blocking their airway will come out of their mouth, rather than moving further down.
2. Give up to five sharp blows between the person's shoulder blades with the heel of your hand (the heel is between the palm of your hand and your wrist).
3. Check if the blockage has cleared.
4. If not, give up to five abdominal thrusts (see below). Should the resident become frailer, they should not give abdominal thrusts and are to continue back blows and cough encouragement and call 999 immediately. Abdominal thrusts are carried out as follows:
 - a. Stand behind the person who is choking.
 - b. Place your arms around their waist and bend them forward.
 - c. Clench one fist and place it right above their belly button.
 - d. Put the other hand on top of your fist and pull sharply inwards and upwards.
 - e. Repeat this movement up to five times.
5. If the person's airway is still blocked after trying back blows and abdominal thrusts, call 999 and ask for an ambulance.
6. Continue with the cycles of five back blows and five abdominal thrusts until help arrives.
7. If the person loses consciousness and they're not breathing, you should begin cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) with chest compressions.
8. Get urgent medical help via the GP/SALT should the resident show signs of persistent coughs or is struggling to swallow their diet.
9. Abdominal thrusts can cause serious injuries. Where this potentially life-saving treatment has been necessary, a health professional such as the GP or a doctor in A&E should always examine the person afterwards.