Choking and CPR

Serena took a first-aid certification class. She learned how to take care of injuries. She also learned how to help someone who has stopped breathing.

First-aid courses teach you about taking care of many injuries. But what do you do if someone has stopped breathing? Learning how to save someone who is choking or who isn’t breathing is very important.

Abdominal Thrust

Have you ever seen someone grab his or her throat because he or she couldn’t breathe? Was this person choking? When you see someone choking, you need to act fast. You will need to give abdominal thrusts. **Abdominal thrusts** (ab DAHM uh nuhl THRUHSTS) are actions that apply pressure to a choking person’s stomach to force an object out of the throat.

First, you need to find out if the victim is actually choking. If the victim can cough or speak, he or she can still breathe. Don’t try to help the victim. Let the victim try to clear his or her throat. If the victim cannot cough or speak, give abdominal thrusts. Abdominal thrusts compress the victim’s abdomen. This increases pressure in the victim’s lungs and airway. The pressure forces the air in the victim’s lungs to push the object out of the victim’s airway.

The figures on the next page show you how to save an adult, child, or infant from choking. You can also use abdominal thrust on yourself. Form a fist. Place the thumb-side of your fist on your stomach between your belly button and breastbone. Cover your hand with your other hand, and quickly push in and upward. You can also use a chair back, counter, or other solid object. Lean forward, and press your stomach against the object. The figure to the left shows this process.

Figure 19 If you're ever alone and choking, you can use a chair back to give yourself abdominal thrusts.
**Figure 20  Rescuing Choking Adults and Children**

1. Stand or kneel behind the victim. The victim may be standing or sitting. Wrap your arms around the victim.

2. Form a fist. Place the thumb side of your fist on the victim's stomach, above the belly button and below the breastbone.

3. Cover your fist with your other hand. Give five quick upward thrusts into the victim's stomach.

4. Repeat abdominal thrusts until the object comes loose.

**Figure 21  Rescuing Choking Infants**

1. Put the infant face up on your forearm. Place your other arm on top of the infant, and hold the infant's jaw. Make sure the infant's nose and mouth aren't covered. Turn the infant over.

2. Support your arm on your thigh so that the infant's head is lower than his or her chest. Give five firm back blows with the heel of your hand.

3. If the object doesn't come loose, turn the infant back over. Continue to support his or her head and neck. Support your arm on your thigh.

4. Place two fingers on the infant's breastbone, between and just below the infant's nipples. Push the breastbone in five times.

5. Repeat back blows and thrusts until the object comes loose.
CPR Certification

You should not give CPR unless you have been trained. If you do not know how to give chest compressions properly, you may cause injury. Also, giving chest compressions to someone who still has a heartbeat can interfere with the heart’s normal function.

Imagine you have found someone unconscious on the floor. Is the victim breathing? Does he or she have a heartbeat? Do you know CPR? CPR stands for cardiopulmonary resuscitation (KAHR dee oh PUL muh NER ee ri SUHS uh TAY shuhn). Cardiopulmonary resuscitation is a technique used to save a victim who isn’t breathing and who doesn’t have a heartbeat.

CPR starts with rescue breathing. Rescue breathing is an emergency technique in which a rescuer gives air to someone who is not breathing. CPR also includes chest compressions (kuhm PRESH uhns). Chest compressions stimulate the heart to start beating again. The figures below and on the next page show CPR for adults, small children, and infants. But to give CPR, you’ll have to know your ABCs first.

- Airway Make sure the victim’s airway is clear and open. If it isn’t, you won’t be able to get air into the victim’s lungs.
- Breathing Is the victim breathing? Look for movement in the victim’s chest. Put your cheek over the victim’s mouth, and see if you feel any breath. If the victim isn’t breathing, start rescue breathing.
- Check Pulse Is the victim’s heart beating? You can check at the victim’s wrist or neck. If you don’t feel a heartbeat, start chest compressions.

**Figure 22 CPR for Adults**

If the victim is not breathing, tilt the victim’s head back. Pinch the victim’s nose shut. Tightly seal your mouth over the victim’s mouth. Slowly blow air into the victim’s mouth until the victim’s chest rises. Remove your mouth, and let the victim exhale. Repeat.

Check for the victim’s pulse. Place the tips of your index and middle fingers on the side of the victim’s neck, just below the victim’s jaw. Check for a heartbeat by holding your fingers in place for about 10 seconds.

If there is no pulse, place the heel of one hand over the victim’s breastbone at a point about two fingers’ width above where the breastbone and ribs meet. Place your other hand on top of the first. Push straight down on the victim’s breastbone. Lift your weight without lifting your hands from the victim’s chest. Repeat.
Pinch the victim's nose shut. Tightly seal your mouth over the child's mouth. If the victim is an infant, seal the nose and mouth with your mouth. Slowly blow air into the victim's lungs until the chest rises. Let the victim exhale, and repeat.

Place the tips of your index and middle fingers on the bone on the inside of the victim's arm, between the elbow and shoulder. Check for a pulse for 10 seconds. A pulse may also be found by using the same technique as for adults.

Depending on age of child

Small Children
Place the heel of one hand over the child's breastbone at a point about two fingers' width above where the breastbone and ribs meet. Keep your fingers off the victim's chest to avoid injuring ribs. Push straight down on the victim's breastbone. Lift your weight without lifting your hand from the victim's chest. Repeat.

Infants
Place your middle and ring fingers on the breastbone at a point about one finger's width below the nipple line. Push the breastbone down no more than 1 inch. Do not lift your fingers from the baby's chest between compressions. Repeat.

Lesson Review

Using Vocabulary
1. What is an abdominal thrust?
2. What is the difference between rescue breathing and CPR?

Understanding Concepts
3. Describe how to give abdominal thrusts to adults and infants.
4. Describe CPR for adults.

Critical Thinking
5. Making Inferences It is very important to take a CPR training course. Someone who tries to give CPR without training may injure a victim. What types of injuries might happen if someone gives CPR without the proper training?