

# Stay safe: choking

**By safely disposing of your liquid waste, you are helping to protect the natural environment. But it's important to protect yourself and others too.**

Each year thousands of people die or are seriously injured through accidents. A lot of these deaths could have been prevented if first aid was given before the emergency services arrived.

## What should you do if someone is injured?

- First, check you and the injured person are not in any danger. If you are, make it safe
- Call 999 or 112 for medical help or an ambulance. The operator will be able to talk you through basic life-saving instructions
- Provide the injured person with first aid.

**The following provides useful instructions on how to apply basic first aid in the event of someone choking:**

## Choking

The following information is for choking in adults and children over 1 year old.

### Mild Choking

If their airway is partially blocked they will usually be able to speak, cry, cough or breathe. In situations like this, a person will usually be able to clear the blockage themselves.

- Encourage them to cough to try to clear the blockage
- Ask them to try to spit out the object if it's in their mouth
- Do not put your fingers in their mouth if you can't see the object as you could end up pushing it further down their mouth.

If coughing doesn't work, hit their back to try and relieve the obstruction.

## Choking continued

### Severe Choking

If choking is severe, the person won't be able to speak, cry, cough or breathe; and without help they will eventually become unconscious.

- Stand behind the person and slightly to one side
- Support their chest with one hand
- Lean the person forward so the object blocking their airway will come out of their mouth rather than moving further down their throat
- Give up to five sharp blows between the person's shoulder blades with the heel of your hand
- Check if the blockage has cleared
- If not, give up to five abdominal thrusts.

### Abdominal Thrusts

Please note this should not be used on babies under 1 year old or pregnant women.

- Stand behind them
- Place your arms around their waist and bend them well forward
- Clench one fist and place it just above their belly button
- Place your other hand on top of your fist and pull sharply inwards and upwards
- Repeat up to five times

If the person's airway is still blocked after trying back blows and abdominal thrusts:

- Call 999 and ask for an ambulance. Tell the 999 operator that the person is choking
- Continue with the cycles of five back blows and five abdominal thrusts until help arrives.

The person choking should always be seen by a healthcare professional afterwards to check for any injuries or small pieces of the obstruction that remain.