

When Someone Is Choking

When you work in an environment where people are consuming food, a choking person is always a very real possibility. Choking is the seventh leading cause of accidental death, but it doesn't have to be that way. If more people learned the Heimlich maneuver, more lives would be saved.

When to Use the Heimlich Maneuver

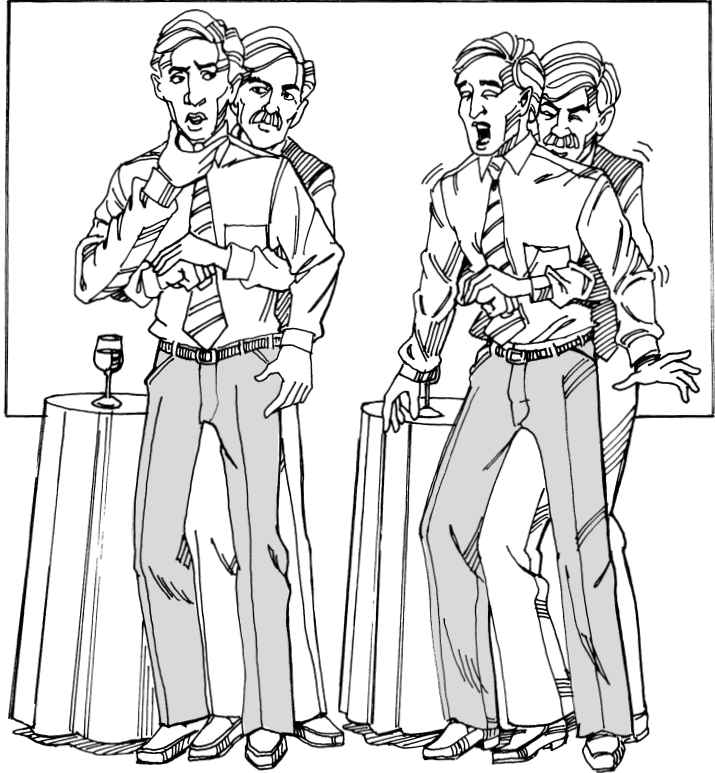
Place a Y next to instances when you should use the maneuver, and an N next to instances when you shouldn't.

A Person:

- 1) _____ is coughing forcefully.
- 2) _____ is turning blue.
- 3) _____ can't talk or breathe.
- 4) _____ can talk and tells you he or she is choking and needs help.
- 5) _____ is making no sound but the veins on the head or neck are swollen.

Answers: N, Y, Y, N, Y

The Heimlich Maneuver



If the person can talk, cough or breathe, don't use the Heimlich maneuver. The person may still be able to dislodge what's stuck in his or her throat.

1. Have someone call for medical help.
2. Stand behind the choking person and put one foot between the victim's legs. If the victim is sitting, bend behind the chair so you can circle your arms around both the victim and the chair.
3. Wrap your arms around the victim's waist.
4. Clench your fist and place it with your thumb inward just above the navel and below the breastbone. (If a choking victim is pregnant or extremely obese, place your fist on the chest instead of the abdomen).
5. Grasp your fist with your other hand. Bending your elbows, pull both hands toward you with a quick upward and inward thrust. The idea is to force air from the lungs to expel the object.
6. After every five thrusts, check the victim. Repeat the thrusts until the object choking the victim comes out.
7. If the person becomes unconscious, stop performing the Heimlich maneuver. Wait for emergency medical help to arrive.
8. A choking victim who is able to breathe again should see a doctor as soon as possible.