**Choking** (LO 4.1, 4.2)

Choking can occur when a foreign object gets lodged in the throat, causing the muscles to contract and the airway to become blocked.

If mild, the casualty should be able to clear the blockage by coughing. If severe the casualty will not be able to breathe, speak or cough, their skin may flush initially but then go pale with blue tinges leading to rapid loss of consciousness and even death.

If you think someone may be choking ask them “are you choking?” & “can you cough?”

If YES, encourage the casualty to cough.

If they can’t cough, check they want & need your help by asking them “Do you want me to help you?”

We then perform a combination of 5 back blows followed by 5 abdominal thrusts that we repeat until the airway is cleared of the obstruction or until the casualty collapses and becomes unresponsive.

**How to perform a back blow:**

Lean the casualty forward, adopt a good stable position and using the heel of your hand give up to 5 sharp blows between the shoulder blades – the aim is to relieve the choking with each blow rather than give all 5

**If the obstruction is still not cleared:**

Stand behind the casualty, adopt a good stable position and place both arms around them. Make a fist with one hand and place just above the belly button. Grasp the hand with your other hand and pull in and up sharply. DO this up to 5 times - the aim is to relieve the choking with each abdominal thrust rather than give all 5

***If the treatment is successful seek immediate medical attention as abdominal thrusts can cause internal damage. If the casualty has difficulty swallowing or has a persistent cough also seek medical attention as the obstruction may still be partially blocking the airway.***

If the obstruction is still not cleared repeat the back blows and abdominal thrusts.

If the casualty becomes unresponsive, start CPR. Call 999

**Considerations:**

If the casualty is pregnant – do not perform abdominal thrusts as these could damage the baby.

Infants – do not perform abdominal thrusts – perform 2-finger chest thrusts instead

**Swift First Aid**

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