Forward

No child should die of choking. Yet every day children choke, and every year hundreds die and thousands land in emergency departments. The Act+Fast Trainer was developed to educate parents and teachers, as well as the children themselves, to learn these simple life-saving techniques. Practicing with this product will provide the confidence to react during an emergency and save the life of a child. Use this trainer to teach yourself and everyone you know, and help make the world a little safer for children.

Timothy Adams, MD
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**Lesson 1—Introduction**

Choking among school-aged children is on the rise.\(^1\) Choking on food and small objects is a leading cause of death in children under the age of 5.\(^2\)\(^3\)\(^4\) Young children may not have fully developed muscles for chewing, enough teeth, or the ability to chew and swallow certain foods thoroughly. Toddlers explore their world by putting things in their mouths and their airways are very small in diameter. These traits and behaviors make them vulnerable to choking on foods and small objects that can lodge in the throat and block the airway.

Choking is largely preventable with a little knowledge and by following proven guidelines. But knowing what to do if a child’s airway becomes blocked is equally important.

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1. A. Conner and Gary A. Smith, Meyli M. Chapin, Lynne M. Rochette, Joseph L. Annest, Tadesse Haileyesus, Kristen States, 2001-2009 Nonfatal Choking on Food Among Children 14 Years or Younger in the United States; Pediatrics; originally published online July 29, 2013;
Lesson 2—Overview

To help reduce the chances of injury and death from choking, this program focuses on prevention strategies and knowing what to do if a choking emergency occurs.

By following the information in this guide, students, teachers, parents, and other caregivers will easily learn how to prevent choking and to respond correctly when a child is choking.

The Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™ provides you with the opportunity to realistically practice life-saving skills in an engaging, hands-on, and effective way. According to the Basic Emergency Lifesaving Skills (BELS) Book, children age 9 and older are capable of learning how to clear a blocked airway. In addition, children as young as 6 years of age have been recorded saving a life using choking rescue skills.

However, safety should always be a primary consideration when learning these skills. Children should be supervised by a responsible adult whenever practicing choking rescue skills with or without the Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™ and when using this guide.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this training, you will be able to:

1. Identify common choking hazards for children.
2. Describe ways to reduce the risks of choking in children.
3. Identify the signs of choking in children.
4. Describe when to call 9-1-1 in a choking emergency.
5. Describe how to give first aid for a conscious choking child.
6. Discuss the importance of follow-up monitoring and medical care for a child who has choked.
7. Safely and effectively demonstrate first aid for choking using the Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™.

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6 http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2012/05/6-year-old-saves-best-friends-life-with-heimlich-maneuver/

Note for Teachers and Instructors:

Approximate Length

When conducting this program in an instructor-led learning environment, teachers and instructors should plan a timeline of approximately 60 minutes with hands on practice using the following suggested agenda:

1. Introduction (5 min)
2. Overview of this Training Program (5 min)
3. How to Prevent Choking in Children (10 min)
4. Signs of Choking (5 min)
5. When to Call for Help (9-1-1) (5 min)
6. How to Give First Aid for a Conscious Choking Child (10 min)
7. The Importance of Follow-up Monitoring and Medical Care for a Child Who Has Choked (5 min)
8. Hands-on Skills Training With the Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™ (15 min)

Program Note—Total length may vary depending on the number of participants and number of Anti Choking Trainers available in the session.

For self-directed learners—The length varies depending on the amount of time spent on practice.

Sources and References—The skills and recommendations in this training material are consistent with nationally accepted, evidence-based guidelines including the 2015 American Heart Association Guidelines Update for CPR and ECC, the 2015 American Heart Association and American Red Cross Guidelines Update for First Aid, the European Resuscitation Council Guidelines for Resuscitation 2015, and the 2015 Consensus on Science with Treatment Recommendations (CoSTR) for CPR and ECC.

Safety Warning—Choking rescue skills including abdominal thrusts and back blows can cause injury. Abdominal thrusts and back blows should never be given when learning these skills, with or without the use of the Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™. To ensure learner safety, abdominal thrusts and back blows should only be simulated and not performed with any significant force.
Lesson 3—How to Prevent Choking in Children

According to the Nationwide Children’s Hospital, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the Consumer Product Safety Commission, common food sources of choking in young children (less than 4 years of age) include–

- Hot dogs and sausages
- Nuts and seeds
- Whole grapes
- Popcorn
- Hard or gooey/sticky candy
- Chunks of peanut butter or cheese
- Raw vegetables such as carrots
- Rice cakes
Other items found in the home that can lodge in a child’s throat and lungs include–

- Latex balloons
- Coins
- Chewing gum
- Marbles and ball shaped objects less than 1 ¾” in diameter
- Toys with small parts that can break off or be squeezed to fit into a child’s mouth
- Clothing buttons
- Small “button” type batteries
- Pen or marker caps

Tips to Prevent Choking in Children include–

- Cutting food into small pieces for young children.
- Supervising children at mealtime.
- Not allowing children to run or play while eating.
- Monitoring and educating older children or siblings to prevent them from giving smaller children dangerous foods or small objects.
- Avoiding toys with small parts, and checking minimum age recommendations on toy packages.
• Do not allow young children to play with coins and other small objects.8

• Check toys and parts with a “choke tube tester” or similar small toy test device.

• Even a paper roll tube can work as a tester.

• If a small toy or object can fit in a specially designed cylinder or tube that is 2 ¼ inches long and 1 ¼ inches wide, it poses a choking hazard to a small child, especially those less than 3 years of age.

Lesson 4—How to Recognize the Signs of Choking in Children

In a choking emergency, quick recognition and action are keys to clearing a blocked airway successfully. When the airway becomes blocked, a child will instinctively begin coughing to clear the blockage and may grasp at the throat.

Other signs of choking include—

- Coughing may be forceful, or weak with wheezing noises.
- The child’s skin color may change.
- The child may have a look of panic on his or her face.
- The child may not be able to cough at all, speak, cry, or breathe.

If the child is not able to cough, speak, cry, or breathe, or can only cough weakly, you must act fast to clear the airway.
Lesson 5—When to Call For Help (9-1-1)

When Should You Call for Help?

Make sure it is safe to approach and identify those who can help when assessing the child for choking.

**Mild Airway Obstruction**

If a choking child is coughing forcefully, you should encourage coughing, observe closely, and not interfere. But be ready to help if the child’s condition gets worse, such as if the child is not able to clear the blockage with coughing, or cannot breathe.

**Severe Airway Obstruction**

If the child cannot cough, speak, cry, or breathe, or is coughing weakly, you should have someone else call 9-1-1, (or the local emergency number) if possible, while you give first aid for choking.

**Do not** wait for help to arrive or delay care. A child who cannot cough, speak, cry, or breathe, or only coughs weakly is not getting any oxygen and needs immediate care.

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**The Lone Rescuer**—In a choking emergency where you are the only other person with the child, and there is no one else available to call 9-1-1, you should give first aid for choking to clear the airway, and then call 9-1-1 or seek medical assistance after the airway blockage is cleared.
Lesson 6—How to Give First Aid for a Conscious Choking Child

How to Give First Aid for a Conscious Choking Child

It is well established that several techniques are effective to clear a blocked airway from food or small objects.

These include abdominal thrusts, back blows (or “back slaps”), and chest thrusts.

Most major emergency care and first aid training organizations in the U.S. recommend a single technique of abdominal thrusts for simplicity of training (for children and adult victims of choking).

The Importance of Proper Technique—Abdominal thrusts should be given quickly, inward and upward, to expel the object so the person can breathe. Each thrust should be given separately and distinctly. Using force might cause injury. It is important not to squeeze the ribcage when giving abdominal thrusts; this will lessen the likelihood of injury to the chest and ribcage. Instead focus your effort on the stomach to expel the object. Proper technique is more important than using force. The Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™ allows you to practice the proper technique to release the foam plug, (“foreign object”), in a safe but realistic training simulation.

Blocked Airways in Infants—Choking rescue skills for infants (less than 1 year of age) are different than for older children and adults. Parents and caregivers of infants should be trained in CPR and airway obstruction for infants.
To Give Abdominal Thrusts—

1. **Assess the Child**

   - Ask the child if he or she is choking.
   - If the child is not able to cough, is coughing weakly, or cannot speak, cry, or breathe, first aid is needed; ask if you can help.
   - If someone else is present, have them call 9-1-1.
   - Reassure the child and stand or kneel behind the child (depending on their height).

**Permission**—If a parent (or guardian) is present, you should get their permission before giving first aid.

**The Lone Rescuer**—If you are alone with the child, give first aid, and then call 9-1-1.
2. **Find Correct Hand Position**

- Wrap your arms around the child’s waist, and find the child’s belly button with one or two fingers.

- Next, make a fist with the other hand and place it flat, thumbside against the child’s stomach, just *above* your finger(s) and *below* the lower tip of the child’s breastbone.

- Cover your fist with the other hand.

3. **Give Abdominal Thrusts**

- Give quick, inward and upward thrusts until the airway is clear.

- Monitor the child until help arrives, and ensure follow-up medical care to assess for possible injury.
● If the child passes out—
  o Help the child to the ground, face-up.
  o Make sure 9-1-1 has been called.
  o Give CPR if you are trained.

**CPR Training**—Parents, teachers and other caregivers of children should be trained in CPR. If a choking child passes out, the choking rescue skills change to performing a slightly modified CPR technique to clear the airway.

**Note to teachers and instructors**—Consider transitioning to the next lesson and hands-on practice session (and if time allows), by conducting a brief review of the skill sequence. Either verbally recap the bulleted steps, show the choking rescue skills video segment from your certified training program (e.g., ARC, AHA, ASHI, MEDIC, National Safety Council, CRC), or give a demonstration of the simulated steps of assessing the child and finding correct hand placement only. **Do not** allow anyone to give actual abdominal thrusts.
Lesson 7—The Importance of Follow-up Monitoring and Medical Care for a Child Who Has Choked

Any small, solid object that has lodged in a child’s airway can cause injury and possible swelling. This may not happen right away. So, while a child may appear to be okay after a choking incident, the airway may slowly close over time, making it difficult to breathe.

In addition, while abdominal thrusts (and back blows) are effective in clearing the airway, they can also cause injury to the child.

Monitor the child closely for any signs of stomach or chest pain, discomfort, or breathing problems until a medical professional can assess the child.

Any child who has choked, or has been given abdominal thrusts (or back blows) to clear the airway should be evaluated by a medical professional as soon as possible.

In the next lesson, you will be introduced to the Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™ and practice how to give effective abdominal thrusts to a choking child.
How to Use the Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™ for Children

Multiple studies have shown that school-aged children can learn life-saving behaviors and skills such as recognizing emergencies, calling for help, giving CPR, and using an AED. In addition, children as young as 6 years of age can also learn how to give first aid for choking.  

With the Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™, teachers, instructors, parents, grandparents and students can learn this life-saving skill in an engaging, realistic, and effective way.

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12 http://abcnews.go.com/blogs/headlines/2012/05/6-year-old-saves-best-friends-life-with-heimlich-maneuver/

To use the Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™ for Children

Practice simulating the basic steps learned in lessons 4-7 while using the Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™. Do not allow anyone to give actual abdominal thrusts:

After preparing and putting on the Trainer, adjust the waist and shoulder straps.

**Assess the Child**

- Ask the child if he or she is choking.
- If the child is not able to cough, is coughing weakly, or cannot speak, cry, or breathe, ask if you can help.
- Have someone else call 9-1-1.
- Reassure the child, and stand or kneel behind the child (depending on their height).

**Find Correct Hand Position**

- Wrap your arms around the child’s waist, and find the “belly button” (on the vest) with one or two fingers.

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Note—Always follow the Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™ operating instructions. Prepare and have the “victim” put on the Anti Choking Trainer. Assist students when putting on the Anti Choking Trainer as needed before practice. Supervise children closely during practice and do not allow anyone to give actual abdominal thrusts or get ahead of others during the step-by-step process.
**Give Abdominal Thrusts**

- Give quick, inward and upward thrusts until the airway is clear.
  - The airway is cleared when the foam plug releases from the “throat” of the Trainer. This is a unique feature that provides the user immediate feedback on the effectiveness of their thrusts.

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**Follow-up care**—Injury to the airway such as swelling or difficulty breathing caused by a blockage of food or other objects can occur over time. In addition, abdominal thrusts may cause injury. Monitor the child closely for any signs of stomach or chest pain, discomfort, or distress. Any child who has choked, or has been given abdominal thrusts (or back blows) to clear the airway, should be evaluated by a medical professional as soon as possible, even if they appear to be okay.
Alternate Methods to Clear the Airway

Combining or modifying choking rescue skills can be effective to clear a blocked airway in certain circumstances.

Alternate method: Back Blows with Abdominal Thrusts—

Back blows (or “slaps”) are sometimes combined with abdominal thrusts or chest thrusts. Back blows are firm strikes with the heel of the rescuer’s hand to the victim’s upper back, between the shoulder blades to dislodge the object. The choking victim should bend at the waist so the throat is lower than the chest.

Alternate Methods can be Practiced—The Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™ has a detachable, padded square that can be placed on the back of the trainer so that accurate positioning of the heel of the hand can be practiced for simulating back blows in combination with abdominal thrusts, if desired or needed.
Alternate Methods to Clear the Airway—
Back Blows With Abdominal Thrusts

1. **Position the Child**
   - Have the child bend at the waist so the throat is lower than the chest.

2. **Give up to 5 Back Blows**
   - Strike the upper back between the shoulder blades with the heel of one hand.

3. **Give up to 5 Abdominal Thrusts**
   - Repeat the sequence of back blows followed by abdominal thrusts until the airway is cleared.

**Safety Note**—Always simulate back blows or abdominal thrusts when using the Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™ to avoid using excessive force on a student “victim.”
Alternate method: Self-rescue—

If you are alone, you can use the back of a chair of an appropriate height with no sharp edges to give yourself abdominal thrusts.

**Alternate Methods to Clear the Airway—Self-rescue**

*You can use the back of a chair of an appropriate height with no sharp edges—*

1. **Position Yourself at the Back of the Chair**

2. **Press Your Abdomen Against the Chair Back**
   - Quickly press your abdomen against the top edge of the chair’s back.
   - Repeat until the airway is cleared.
Alternate method: Self-rescue—

In addition, you can give yourself abdominal thrusts:

Alternate method: Sitting Position—

The abdominal thrust is given in the same way, whether the choking person is standing or sitting in a chair.

Alternate method: Manikin Demo (For CPR Instructors)—
Additional Tips—

The correct hand position on the Trainer closely simulates actual hand position on a choking child’s abdomen.
Summary and Review—

- Choking is a leading cause of injury and death in children under the age of 5.
- Choking is largely preventable with knowledge and following proven guidelines.
- Knowing what to do in a choking emergency is equally important.
- Children as young as 6 years old can save a life with choking rescue skills.
- A child who cannot cough, speak, cry, or breathe, or is only coughing weakly, needs immediate help.
- You should have someone call 9-1-1 if a choking child needs first aid.
- Abdominal thrusts can be given to clear food or a foreign object lodged in a child’s throat.
- The Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™ allows you to learn and practice choking rescue skills in a realistic, engaging, and effective way.
- Any child who has choked, or has been given abdominal thrusts (or back blows) to clear the airway, should be evaluated by a medical professional as soon as possible, even if they appear to be fine.
Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: Can kids use the Trainer?
A: The Trainer is used in schools, by Boy and Girl Scout troops and for babysitter training. There have been documented cases of kids as young as 6 years old successfully performing the Abdominal Thrust Maneuver and saving lives.

Q: Are the Foam Plugs reusable?
A: Yes, they are reusable. If you lose them or need to replace them, they can be ordered separately.

Q: How durable is the Trainer?
A: The Trainer is very durable, made of high quality neoprene (wet suit material), and should last many years with frequent use.

Q: How should I clean this Trainer?
A: Simply remove the PVC bladder and airway assembly, and hand-wash the neoprene vest using a mild detergent. Hang to air dry.

Q: Does the Trainer come with a warranty?
A: Yes, there is a full 1 year warranty. If you have a problem, you may contact our warranty department at: warranty@actfastmed.com.

Q: If I’m having any difficulty using my Trainer, who do I contact?
A: You may email our customer service department with any questions at: info@actfastmed.com.

Q: How should abdominal thrusts be given?
A: Abdominal thrusts should be given quickly, inward and upward, to expel the object so the person can breathe. Each thrust should be given separately and distinctly. Using force might cause injury. It is important not to squeeze the ribcage when giving abdominal thrusts; this will lessen the likelihood of injury to the chest and ribcage. Instead, focus your effort on the stomach to expel the object. Proper technique is more important than using force. The Act+Fast Anti Choking Trainer™ allows you to practice the proper technique to release the foam plug, (“foreign object”), in a safe but realistic training simulation.

Q: If someone’s airway has been cleared with thrusts and appears okay, is it necessary to see a doctor?
A: Abdominal thrusts, even when performed correctly, could cause injury. A foreign object can cause damage that may cause the airway to swell and restrict breathing. This may not happen quickly and may occur over a period of time. For these reasons, a person who has choked, or has been given abdominal thrusts, should be evaluated by a medical professional as soon as possible.
Acknowledgments

Ted Crites, CHES
The author of this Instructional Guide, Ted Crites, is a long time emergency medical care instructor, content developer/writer, and instructional designer. He has worked for the American National Red Cross, Health and Safety Institute, government sector, and has developed many safety training programs for lay rescuers, law enforcement, first responders, and healthcare professionals. He has won several national and international awards for his work and accomplishments over the years.

Victor Robinson
Art Direction and Graphic Design was provided by the studio at Vic Robinson Design. Victor is an industrial designer specializing in the development and production of consumer products and brands, having created hundreds of designs for clients ranging from Disney to Nike to Lucas Films. His work creating the Anti Choking Trainer was honored as a finalist in the Business Week magazine sponsored, International Design Excellence Awards (IDEA).
Keep calm and follow your training.

You can do it!