

# LESSON IV-10: First Aid for Choking

## Student Learning Objectives:

- IV-29. Students will list situations in which choking might occur.
- IV-30. Students will demonstrate the technique for first aid for choking.

## Preparation

- Gather the needed materials.
- Read pages 13 to 24, 43 to 46, and 51 to 55 of the book, *Community First Aid & Safety*.
- Obtain a “Choking Charlie” mannequin from your local American Red Cross or Comprehensive School Health Coordinator.
- If you have invited a resource person to speak to the class, confirm his/her availability.
- Duplicate enough copies of the Master, Choking Rescue, for each student to have one.
- Duplicate the Family Resource Sheet so that each student will have a copy to take home at the conclusion of this lesson.

## Materials

### Resources

- Book: *Community First Aid & Safety*, American Red Cross
- Master: Choking Rescue
- Model: Choking Charlie
- Poster: “When Someone Is Choking” OR “Steps for Choking Emergencies,” American Red Cross, 1993
- Optional Resource Person: Choking rescue instructor
- Family Resource Sheet: First Aid for Someone Who Is Choking

**Time:** 40 minutes, not including the Optional Activity

## Lesson Procedure

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### Introduction: 2 minutes

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Connect this lesson on first aid for choking with the previous lessons on the digestive system.

1. State:

*We have learned a lot about the digestive system. If you like to eat, pat your stomach. Eating can be a pleasure, but it can also be dangerous if it isn't done carefully. If you have ever heard of someone choking on food or another object, place your hand across your throat.*

2. Show the students how to place their hands across their throats as pictured on page 43 (1993 edition) or page 45 (2002 edition) of the book, *Community First Aid & Safety*. Explain:

*This is the sign for choking. Since a person can't speak while choking, it is important to know this sign. Use it if you are choking and need help. Today, we will learn what to do if someone is choking.*

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**Activity 1: 6 minutes**

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Describe how choking occurs and list the situations in which someone might choke. Explain how to avoid choking.

1. Explain:

*You have two tubes that run down the inside of your neck. One tube, called the esophagus, carries the food from the mouth to the stomach. The other tube, called the trachea, carries the air you breathe from your nose and mouth down to your lungs. Whenever you swallow, the food has to cross over the opening of the trachea and go into the esophagus. In order to make sure no food goes into the trachea by mistake, a cartilage flap closes over the trachea every time you swallow. If you remember the name of that cartilage flap that closes over the trachea, point to your throat.*

Call on a student to give the answer epiglottis. Explain:

*There are times when the epiglottis is not able to keep food or some other object out of the trachea. When that happens, the object keeps air from going into the lungs. The body tries to get rid of the blockage by coughing. Sometimes, this is enough to clear the trachea. Other times, the person chokes and can't breathe at all. A person can't live very long without air, so it's important to prevent choking and to know what to do if someone is choking.*

2. Ask the students to think about actions that might result in choking. Write their ideas on the chalkboard and include the following:

- Gulping large pieces of unchewed food, especially meat;
- Laughing or talking while swallowing food;
- Getting excited or tripping while walking and eating; or
- Running with candy or other food in mouth.

3. Read "Common Causes of Choking" aloud to the students. It is on page 43 (1993 edition) or page 45 (2002 edition) of the book *Community First Aid & Safety*.

Teacher's Note: Alcohol is a factor in choking for two reasons: it slows reflexes, including the cough reflex, and it may lead to vomiting and unconsciousness.