



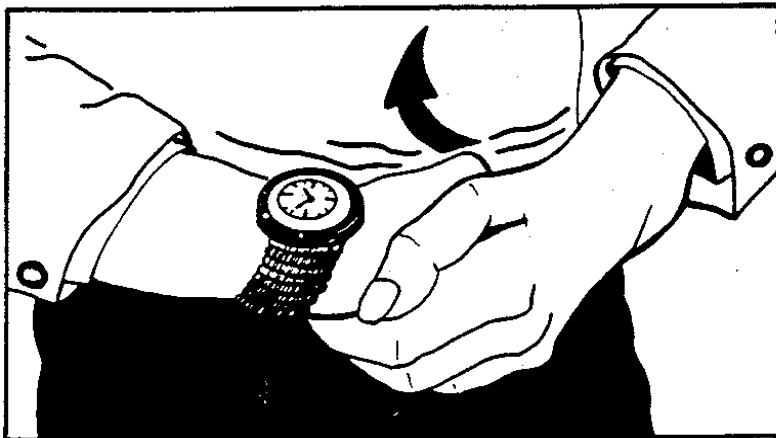
A CHOKING ADULT

Someone who is choking and cannot breathe has just four minutes before death or permanent brain damage takes place. Thousands of adults and children die from choking each year. Fortunately, in 1973, Dr. Henry Heimlich created a life-saving technique to help choking victims. The Heimlich maneuver is so simple to learn, that an 8-year old child was reported to have saved the life of his older brother by using this technique.

Recognize Choking

Most often, adults begin choking while they are eating. Instinctively, people who are choking clutch at their throats. A person who is choking cannot talk to you, but if you ask someone who is clutching their throat "Are you choking," in most cases the person can nod their head "yes." There are three other symptoms of choking. First, the person has trouble speaking or breathing. Second, the skin turns pale or bluish. Finally, the victim loses consciousness.

Make a fist with one hand, place the thumb against the abdomen, and make quick upward thrusts until the food or object is forced out of the windpipe.



Persons who are choking may feel somewhat embarrassed and may try to leave the room. Obviously, this can be dangerous—if they should black out with no one there they could die in a matter of minutes. Never allow a choking victim to leave the room alone.

How To Do The Heimlich Maneuver

The Heimlich Maneuver can be done in different ways, but it always depends on a quick upward thrust into the choking victim's abdomen. This movement forces air out of the lungs suddenly, which then forces the food or object out of the windpipe.

Most commonly, the victim is standing. If you are the rescuer, stand behind the victim and circle his or her waist with your arms. Make a fist (your thumb will stick up somewhat like a knob). Place the knob just above the person's navel. Hold your fist tight with your other hand, and make quick, strong, upward thrusts into the victim's



The Heimlich Maneuver is easy to learn and can save a life in a few seconds.

abdomen. Repeat the movement until the foreign object is dislodged and the person is able to breathe freely. (If the food or object does not fall out of the person's mouth, remove it carefully by hand to avoid re-inhaling.)

To avoid rib injuries, use only your hands when helping the victim. Do not squeeze with your arms in a "bear hug." If the victim is sitting, you can perform the maneuver the same as you would if he or she were standing. If the victim is lying on the floor, make sure he or she is rolled face up. Then, kneel with your legs on either side of the victim and perform the upward thrusts. (This approach works well for rescuers who are small or relatively weak.)

In the past 15 years, the Heimlich Maneuver has saved thousands of lives. It takes only a few minutes to learn and may be the most valuable skill you will ever learn.