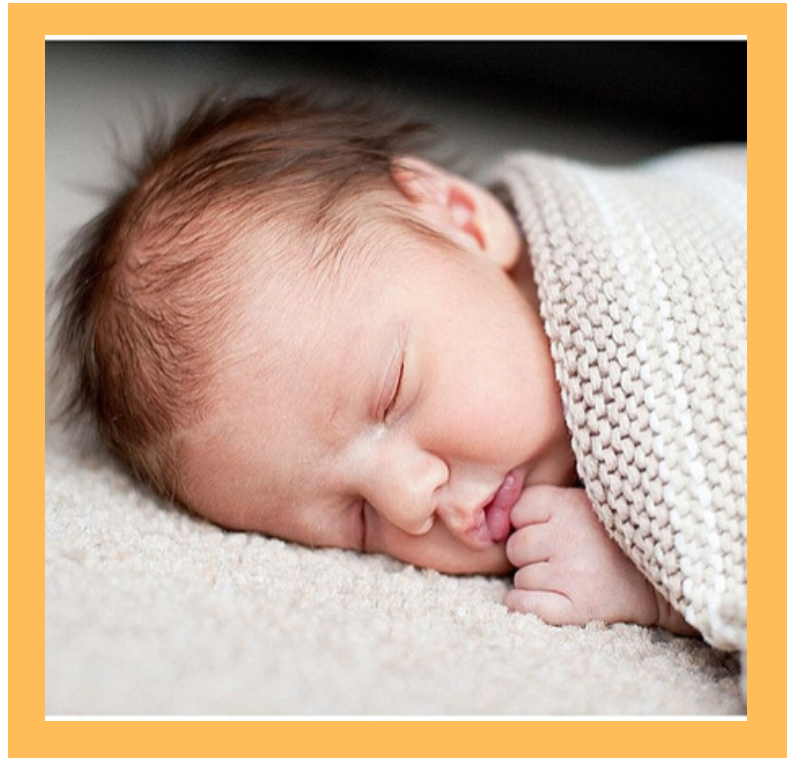


CHOKING BABY

FACTSHEET FOUR



Congratulations! Having a baby is such an exciting time and it can also raise a whole lot of natural concerns about how to keep your baby safe. One of the best ways to reduce any anxiety is to be prepared and informed, and this factsheet can help with that. If you still have any further questions, do email us at

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CHOKING AND THE GAG REFLEX

Many of us have a fear of choking or are worried about weaning our babies as they may choke.

As we introduce solids the baby will often gag as they learn to swallow and this is totally natural. However occasionally an item or piece of food will slip further back causing choking.

The gag reflex in a baby is being triggered as they put food in their mouth. In younger babies the gag reflex 'trigger zone' is a lot further forward in the mouth than it is in adults. This helps to prevent them from swallowing toys and other objects, which often go in their mouth as a way of learning.

How do I know if my baby is choking?

- Bluish skin colour
- Difficulty breathing - ribs and chest pull inward
- Loss of consciousness if blockage is not cleared

Do's and Don'ts

Can I just tip the baby upside down?

No this is not effective and may cause further injury if you happen to drop them. Tipping them upside down may also move the object further up their throat.

Can't I just use my fingers to clear the item?

If you put your fingers blindly into their mouth to try to remove any foreign object you risk pushing the object further down or actually damaging the soft, sensitive tissue at the back of the throat, which could swell and cause further harm. You are also stopping the baby's natural reflexes from unchoking themselves by having your fingers in the way.

However if you can clearly see an object in a baby's mouth and you are able to pluck it out safely with your fingertips, you could do so.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO?

1. Give up to five back blows.

Hold the baby face down along your thigh with their head lower than their bottom. Make sure you are supporting their head by holding the jaw. Hit them firmly on their back between the shoulder blades up to five times. The back blows create a strong vibration and pressure in the airway, which is often enough to dislodge the blockage. If back blows do not dislodge the object, move on to step two.



2. Give up to five chest thrusts.

Turn the baby over so they are facing upwards and place two fingers in the middle of their chest just below the nipples. Push sharply downwards up to five times.

3. **If the item hasn't come out call 999** and repeat again, alternating between back blows and chest thrusts.

4. **If baby falls unconscious start CPR.**

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If you have a specific question or would to like book onto a paediatric first aid course, please contact **Jo Worrall at Jo@twist-training.com**.

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