BrightCourse
FACT SHEET

Infant CPR

CPR stands for cardiopulmonary resuscitation. Cardio means "heart," pulmonary means "lungs," and resuscitation means "to revive someone from apparent death." CPR is made up of two basic skills:

- providing chest compressions to circulate the blood
- giving breaths to put oxygen back into the blood

Why Should You Learn CPR?

While this lesson doesn't replace an accredited CPR class, it will familiarize you with important lifesaving steps that can be used in many emergencies in which a person's breathing and heartbeat have stopped or become irregular.

Performing CPR keeps oxygenated blood flowing to a person's vital organs and buys the person more time for emergency help to arrive. This is why it's so important for you to be trained and certified in CPR. Your ability to perform CPR may be your child's only hope of survival.

Choking[2]

Choking occurs more easily with children because of their small airways, because they aren't good with chewing, and because they put things in their mouths all the time. Choking is one of the most common reasons a child could stop breathing. So it is most important to know how to clear their airways.

Choking in an Infant Less Than One Year Old

If your infant is ***coughing*** hard or has a strong ***cry***, do not provide first aid right away. He may be able to push the object out by coughing.[2]

However, if you know that something is blocking your baby's airway and they cannot cough it out, provide first aid to remove the object immediately.

Signs of choking in an infant include:

- a panicked look on their face
- an inability to make any noise
- a bluish color to their skin

You should ***never*** blindly sweep your finger into the baby's mouth. You could actually ***push*** the object further back into their airway. Only attempt to remove an object if you can clearly see it in their mouth.

Steps to dislodge an object obstructing an infant's airways:

- In a seated position, hold your infant face-down on your forearm, which you'll rest on your thigh. Support his head and jaw with your hand.
- Give your baby up to five back slaps between his shoulder blades with the heel of your hand. Make sure his head is lower than his chest so that gravity will help to pull the object out.
- If the object doesn't come out after five back slaps, then turn your baby onto his back while supporting his head. Using two fingers placed at the center of the infant's breastbone, give five chest thrusts to help dislodge the object. If you can see the object while you are performing these chest thrusts, then remove it by using your fingers.
- Repeat the back slaps and chest thrusts until the object comes out.

- Perform CPR immediately if the object continues to block the infant's airway and he becomes unresponsive. You can tell that your baby is unresponsive when he becomes limp and makes no sound or movements.
- Continue CPR, checking for the object every time you give breaths, until the infant begins breathing on his own or until emergency help arrives.

Choking in a Child One Year of Age or Older

For a child who is choking, you will need to perform abdominal thrusts, also known as the Heimlich maneuver.[7] Take the following steps:

- Kneel behind the child, wrapping your arms around his waist.
- Make a fist with one hand.
- Place the thumb of your fist slightly above his belly button but below the child's ribs.
- Grasp your fist with your other hand.
- Thrust inward and upward. Do this until the object dislodges or until the child becomes unresponsive.
- Perform CPR immediately if he becomes unresponsive or is not breathing.

No matter the reason, if a baby or child is unresponsive AND is not breathing or is only gasping, then you must perform CPR immediately. Even if you are unsure about whether your infant or child needs CPR, you should still go ahead and start it. CPR is not likely to harm an infant or child who is not in cardiac arrest, but you may save his life in the event that he is.[4]

Before Performing CPR[4]

There are only three differences in performing CPR on a child versus on an infant. How you administer the chest compressions, how deeply you compress the chest, and how you administer the breaths. (See diagrams on pages 4 and 5).

- Make sure the scene is safe.
- Check for his response. You can do this by flicking the bottom of your infant's foot and shouting his name. If your child is over one year of age, then tap his shoulders firmly and shout his name.
- Call 911 and yell for help. If you're alone with the child or infant, administer 2 minutes of care, then call 911. If there is more than one person, send someone to call 9-1-1
- Deliver 2 rescue breaths if the child or infant isn't breathing. **This is appropriate if and only if the child has a definite pulse without breathing. If they have no pulse, the rescuer should start on the chest 30:2 breaths.**
- With the head tilted back slightly and the chin lifted, pinch the child's nose shut, make a complete seal by placing your mouth over the child's mouth and breathe into the child's mouth twice. ***For infants, use your mouth to make a complete seal over the infant's mouth and nose, then blow in for one second to make the chest clearly rise. Now, deliver two rescue breaths.***
- Begin CPR if the child or infant is unresponsive.

Performing CPR[4]

1. Kneel beside the child or baby.

2. Push hard, push fast

- For children, place the heel of one hand on the center of the chest, then place the heel of the other hand on top of the first hand, and lace your fingers together. **Deliver 30 quick compressions that are each about 2**

inches deep at a rate of 100 to 120 per minute.

- **For infants, use your two thumbs to deliver 30 quick compressions that are each about 1.5 inches deep at a rate of 100 to 120 per minute.**

3. Give 2 rescue breaths.

4. Keep going. Continue the baby or child CPR steps until you see obvious signs of life, like breathing, or until an AED is ready to use, another trained responder or EMS professional is available to take over, you're too exhausted to continue, or the scene becomes unsafe.

Remember CAB

While breathing is an important part of CPR, studies have found that compressions are the most important thing you can do to help someone who is in cardiac arrest. This is because there is enough oxygen in the blood to last for a few minutes after someone stops breathing—and it is crucial to get that oxygen to the heart and brain before it is gone. To help you remember how to perform CPR, remember C-A-B, or CAB: Compression, Airway, Breathing.

Conclusion

Medical emergencies can happen at any time and anywhere—and it only takes minutes for damage to occur to your baby's brain, heart, and other vital organs. Your ability to perform CPR will double or even triple your child's chances of survival, and it will give you peace of mind in knowing that you can help save them. Remember that, while this lesson is informative, the only way to truly ensure that you can perform CPR correctly is to become trained and certified by an accredited instructor. Actual practice of the choking and CPR steps is critical to being able to successfully help your child in an emergency. **Don't wait for a tragedy to occur before you learn CPR. Instead, learn CPR to help avoid a tragedy. It only takes a few hours to take the class, and you will gain a skill you will never regret having. To find a certified CPR class near you, go to www.redcross.org, and, under the training and certification tab, click on "Find Classes."**

Resources include:

1. Williams, Glenda, MD, Pediatrician, Interview
2. "Choking - Infant under 1 Year: Medlineplus Medical Encyclopedia." MedlinePlus, U.S. National Library of Medicine, medlineplus.gov/ency/article/000048.htm. Accessed 1/27/2020
3. Amburg, Jessie Van. "First Aid for a Choking Child: How to Help an Infant or Toddler Who Is Choking." What to Expect, 28 Sept. 2021, www.whattoexpect.com/toddler/childhood-injuries/first-aid-for-a-choking-child.aspx. Accessed 1/27/2020
4. American Heart Association, Topjian AA, Raymond TT, Atkins D, Chan M, Duff JP, Joyner BL Jr, Lasa JJ, Lavonas EJ, Levy A, Mahgoub M, Meckler GD, Roberts KE, Sutton RM, Schexnayder SM; on behalf of the Pediatric Basic and Advanced Life Support Collaborators. Part 4: pediatric basic and advanced life support: 2020 American Heart Association Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Emergency Cardiovascular Care. Circulation. 2020;142(suppl 2):S469–S523. doi: 10.1161/CIR.0000000000000090. Accessed 5/28/2024
5. "CPR & ECC Guidelines." Cpr.heart.org, American Heart Association, cpr.heart.org/en/resuscitation-science/cpr-and-ecc-guidelines. Accessed 1/27/2020
6. "About CPR First Aid CPR Facts and Stats." Cpr.heart.org, American Heart Association, cpr.heart.org/AHAECC/CPRAndECC/AboutCPRFirstAid/CPRFactsAndStats/UCM_475748_CPR-Facts-and-Stats.jsp. Accessed 1/27/2020