

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

Breathing Problems, Severe Choking, Heart Attack,
Stroke, etc.

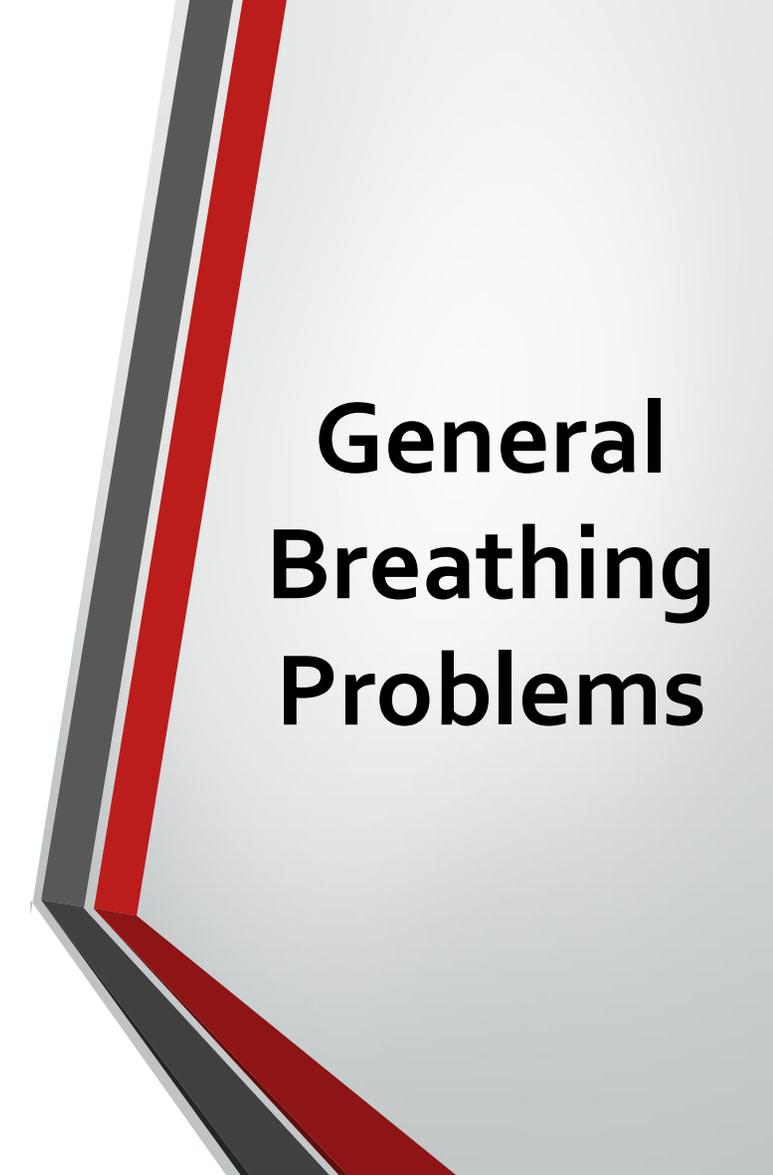


**Breathing
very fast or
very slowly**

**Having
trouble with
every breath**

**Has noisy
breathing – you
hear a sound or
whistle as the air
enters or leaves
the lungs**

**Can only make
sounds or speak
no more than a
few words at a
time in between
breaths**



General Breathing Problems

i.e., Asthma

1. Make sure the scene is safe

2. Ask the person if s/he needs help and if "YES", then ask if s/he has the right medicine (i.e., inhaler)

3. Assemble and use the inhaler

4. Phone 9-1-1 if

- The person has no medicine
- The person does not get better after using their medicine
- The person's breathing gets worse
- The person has trouble speaking
- The person becomes unresponsive

5. Stay with the person until advanced training arrives to take over

Actions for Helping with Breathing Problems

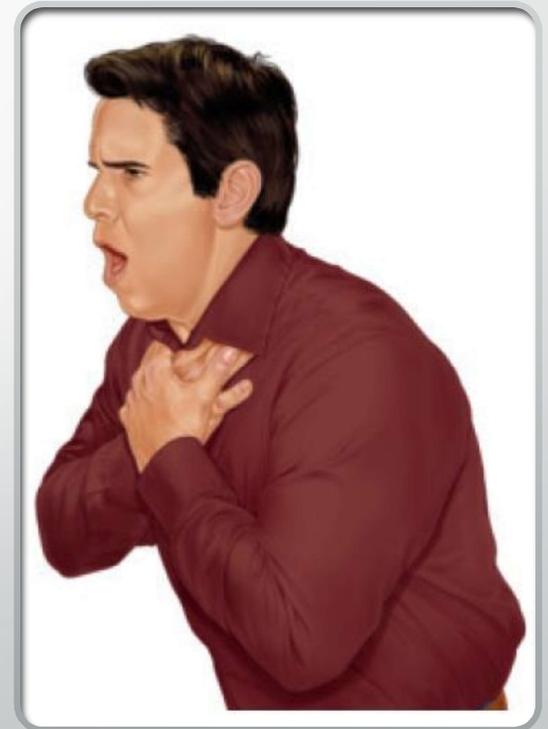
Assess Choking & Take Action

Mild Airway Blocking

- Can talk or make sounds and/or cough loudly
- **Actions:**
- Stand by and let the person cough but if there is breathing problems, phone 9-1-1

Severe Airway Blocking

- Cannot breathe, talk or make sounds, has a cough that has no sound and/or makes the choking sign
- **Actions:**
- Act quickly and follow the steps to help an adult, child or infant with a severe airway block



How to Help a Choking Adult or Child

1. If you think someone is choking, ask "Are you choking? Can I help you?"

2. If the person nods "YES", tell the person you are going to help

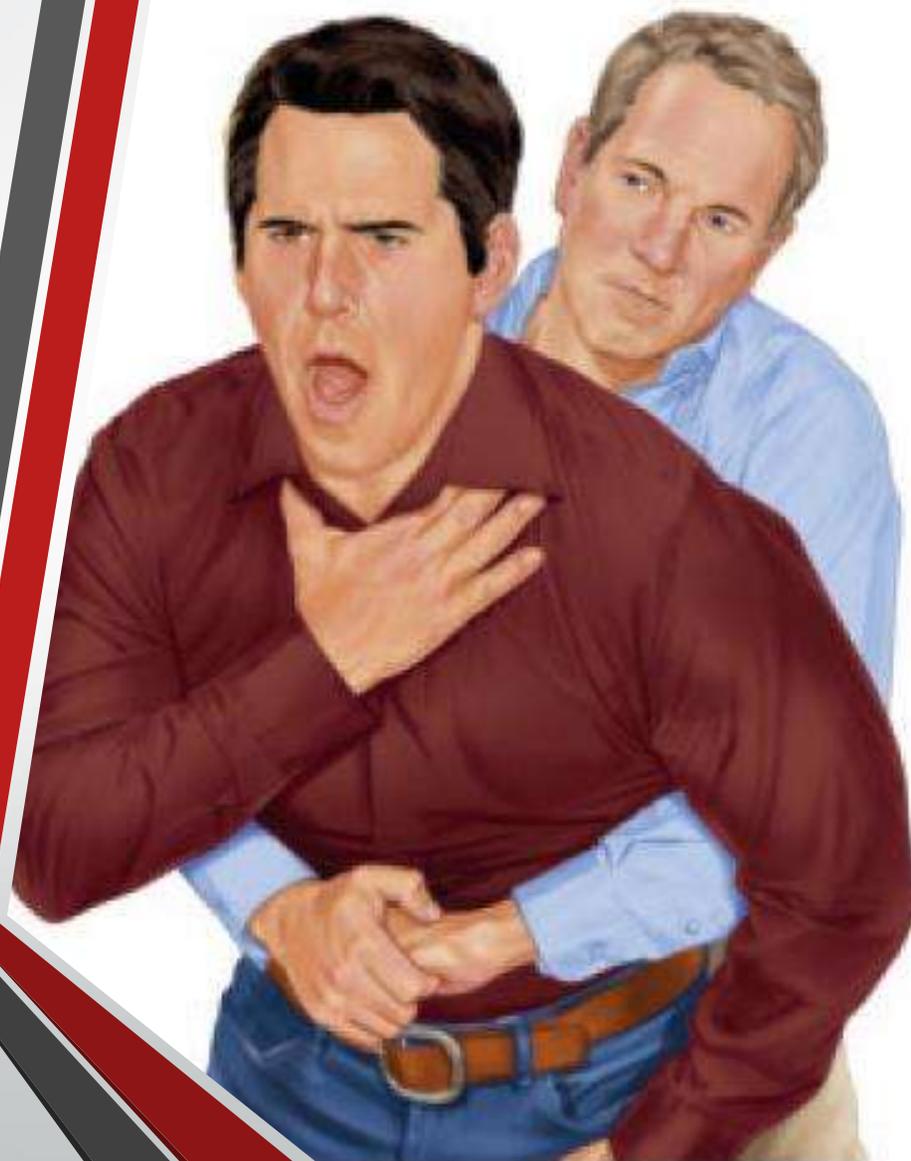
3. Get behind the person and wrap your arms around the person's waist so that your hands are in front

4. Make a fist with 1 hand

5. Put the thumb side of your fist slightly above the belly button and well below the breastbone

6. Grasp the fist with your other hand and give quick upward thrusts into the abdomen

7. Give thrusts until the object is forced out and the person can breathe, cough, or speak, or until s/he becomes unresponsive



How to Help a Choking Pregnant Woman or Large Adult or Child

If you cannot wrap your arms fully around the waist, give thrusts on the chest instead of on the abdomen

Put your arms under the armpits and your hands on the lower half of the breastbone

Pull straight back to give chest thrusts

How to Help a Choking Infant

Use back slaps and chest thrusts to help remove the object because giving thrusts to an infant's abdomen can cause serious harm

Action Steps

1. Hold the infant facedown on your forearm, support the infant's head and jaw with one hand
2. Give up to 5 back slaps with the heel of your other hand, between the infant's shoulder blades
3. If the object doesn't come out, turn the infant faceup and support the head
4. Give up to 5 chest thrusts, using 2 fingers of your hand to push on the chest in
5. Repeat giving 5 slaps and 5 chest thrusts until the infant can breathe, cough, or cry or until s/he becomes unresponsive

Allergic Reactions

Allergies are quite common and can quickly turn into a medical emergency. Things that can cause allergic reactions –

- (a) FOOD: eggs, nuts, chocolate, pineapples, etc.
- (b) INSECT BITES & STINGS: bee, wasp, etc.
- (c) MEDICATIONS

Mild

- A stuffy nose, sneezing, and itching around the eyes
- Itchy of the skin
- Raised, red rash on the skin (hives)

Severe

- Trouble with breathing
- Swelling of the tongue and face
- Signs of shock

Using an Epinephrine Pen



Will help someone with a severe allergic reaction breathe more easily



Contains a small amount of medicine that can be injected through clothing



Takes several minutes before the medicine to work



Injection is given in the side of the thigh

How to Use an Epinephrine Pen

1. Take off the safety cap
2. Press the tip of the injector hard against the side for the person's thigh, about halfway between the hip and the knee
3. Hold the pen in the place for about 10 seconds
4. Pull the pen straight out, making sure you don't put your fingers over the end that has been pressed against the person's thigh
5. Rub the injection spot for about 10 seconds
6. Note the time of the injection and give the pen to the emergency responders for proper disposal
7. Call 9-1-1 if the person doesn't get better or consider giving a second dose, if available

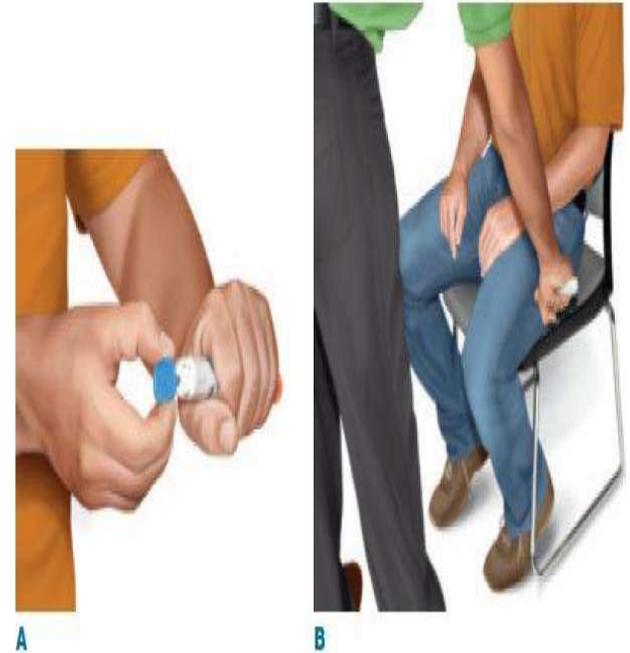


Figure 15. Using an epinephrine pen. A, Taking off the safety cap. B, A rescuer uses the pen.

Sudden Cardiac Arrest

- Results from an abnormal heart rhythm
- Causes the heart to quiver so that the heart no longer pump blood to the brain, lungs, and other organs
- Within seconds the person becomes unresponsive and is not breathing
- Victim needs immediate lifesaving treatment

Heart Attack

- Occurs when blood flow to part of the heart muscle that is blocked by a clot
- Typically, during a heart attack, the heart continues to pump blood
- Experience discomfort or pain in the chest, uncomfortable feeling in one or both arms, the neck, the jaw, or the back between the shoulder blades

Heart Attack

Signs of Heart Attack

Chest Discomfort

- In the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes or that goes away and comes back
- Feels like uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain

Discomfort in other areas of the body

- Pain or discomfort in one or both arms, the back , the neck, the jaw, or stomach

Other signs

- Shortness of breath (with or without chest discomfort)
- Breaking out in a cold sweat
- Nausea or light-headedness

Actions to Help Someone with Heart Attack

1. Make sure the person stays calm and rests
2. Phone 9-1-1
3. Ask someone to get the first aid kit and AED if available
4. If the person has no allergy to aspirin, no serious bleeding, and no signs of a stroke, have the person chew and swallow 1 adult or 2 low-dose aspirins
5. Give CPR if the person becomes unresponsive

Fainting

Faint is a short period of time, usually less than a minute, when a person briefly stops responding and then seems fine

May occur

- Stands without moving for a long time, especially if it is hot
- Has a heart condition
- Suddenly stands after squatting or bending down
- Receives bad news

Actions to Take

1. Help the person lie flat on the floor
2. Phone 9-1-1 if the person doesn't improve or becomes unresponsive
3. If the person becomes unresponsive, give CPR
4. If the person is responsive, ask the person to continue lie flat on the floor until s/he can sit up and feels normal
5. If the person fell, look for injuries caused by the fall and phone 9-1-1 as needed

Diabetes & Low Blood Sugar

Diabetes affects the levels of sugar in blood, too much or too little sugar causes problems

- Insulin helps with maintaining sugar levels

Low blood sugar can occur if a person with diabetes has not eaten or is vomiting, has not eaten enough food for the level of activity, or has injected too much insulin

Signs of low blood sugar in a person with diabetes

- Irritable or confused
- Hungry, thirsty or weak
- Sleepy
- Sweaty

Actions to Take

1. Ask the person to eat or drink something with sugar – i.e., orange juice, soft chewy candy, jellybeans, fruit leather, whole milk, etc.
2. Have person sit quietly or lie down
3. If the person does not improve within 15 minutes, phone 9-1-1

Stroke

Stroke occurs when blood stops flowing to a part of the brain

Warning signs of Stroke – Use the FAST method

- **Face** drooping: Does one side of the face droop or is it numb?
- **Arm** weakness: Is one arm weak or numb?
- **Speech** difficulty: Is speech slurred?
- **Time** to phone 9-1-1: If someone shows any of these symptoms, phone 9-1-1

Actions to Take

1. Phone 9-1-1
2. Note the time when the stroke signs first appeared
3. Remain with the person until someone with more advanced training arrives and takes over
4. If the person becomes unresponsive and is not breathing normally or only gasping, give CPR

Seizure

Seizure is abnormal electrical activity in the brain

Signs of seizure may differ, some may –

- Lose muscle control
- Having jerk movement of the arms, legs, and sometimes other parts of the body
- Fall to the ground
- Stop responding

During seizure, a person may bite their tongue, cheek or mouth

Seizure

Actions to Help a Person Who is Having a Seizure

1. Move furniture or other objects out of the way
2. Place a small pad or towel under the person's head
3. Phone 9-1-1 and get the first aid kit

Actions to Help a Person AFTER Having a Seizure

1. Check if the person is responsive and breathing
2. Stay with the person until someone with more advanced training arrives and takes over
 - a) If the person is having trouble breathing because of vomiting or fluids in their mouth, roll the person onto their side
 - b) If the person is unresponsive and is not breathing normally or only gasping, give CPR