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In the January 27, 2017 edition of “**NYS PTA**Alert”, NYS PTA included some excellent resources for parents.

One of the resources was a video which shows how to save a choking child in seconds. St. John Ambulance, an organization dedicated to teaching medical first aid, produced the video. Statistics show that 40% of parents have witnessed their own baby choke, yet over 80% of these parents had no idea what to do in such a situation. This is an alarming statistic, especially when you consider that an average of 34 children are treated for choking on food, or other small objects, every day.

Ideally, all parents and caregivers should receive first aid training to be aware of the proper steps to take in a lifesaving situation. However, many parents and other childcare providers are not trained in first aid or CPR. Statistics have shown that **70-80%** of parents would not know how to assist an unconscious child, or administer CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation). In the forty (40) second video, four characters – a pen cap, a marble, a gummy/jelly baby, and a princess – work together, in a fun-filled manner, to show caregivers the proper life-saving technique. The link to the video is here:

<http://www.shareably.net/easy-way-to-save-a-choking-baby-v1/>

The size of a young child's trachea (windpipe) or breathing tube is approximately the size of a drinking straw in diameter. Imagine a piece of popcorn or other food/object being lodged in this small area!

Many people are unaware that the Heimlich Maneuver is **not** recommended for use on children younger than the age of one. The video demonstrates the proper technique. Step by step instructions regarding how to save a choking child are as follows:

Clear the airway, and do the following only if the infant cannot cry, cough or breathe:

- Support the infant face down by holding the head in one hand with the torso on your forearm against your thigh
- Give up to five back slaps between the shoulder blades with the heel of your other hand
- If the object is not expelled, roll the infant face up, supporting the back of the infant's head with your hand
- Place two fingers on the breastbone just below the nipple line
- Give five chest thrusts about one per second about 1 ½ inches deep
- Continue cycles of five back slaps and five chest thrusts until the object is expelled or the infant becomes unresponsive
- If the infant becomes unresponsive or is found unresponsive, [begin CPR](#)” (National Safety Council)

<http://www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/safety-at-home-choking.aspx>

**For infants under the age of one (1) year old, the following steps for performing CPR are recommended:**

- Position the infant on his or her back.
- Give 30 gentle chest compressions at the rate of 100-120/minute. Use two or three fingers in the center of the chest just below the nipples. Press down approximately one-third the depth of the chest (about 1 and a half inches).
- Open the airway using a head tilt lifting of chin. Do not tilt the head too far back.
- If the baby is not breathing or not breathing normally, cover the baby's mouth and nose with your mouth and give 2 gentle breaths. Each breath should be 1 second long. You should see the baby's chest rise with each breath.
- Continue with 30 pumps and 2 breaths until help arrives”

<http://depts.washington.edu/learncpr/infantcpr.html>

For an interactive poster, which demonstrates how to perform CPR, see the following link:

<http://www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/CPR-Steps.aspx>

For older children, teens and adults, the Heimlich Maneuver is the procedure to follow when choking is suspected. If you see such a person clutching their throat, coughing, gagging, wheezing or passed out, here are the steps to follow:

If a person is coughing forcefully, encourage continued coughing to clear the object.

A person who can't cough, speak or breathe, however, needs immediate help. Ask if they are choking and let them know you will use abdominal thrusts, also known as the Heimlich Maneuver, to prevent suffocation. (As noted above, this procedure is not recommended for children younger than the age of one (1):

- Stand behind the victim with one leg forward between the victim's legs
- For a child, move down to their level and keep your head to one side
- Reach around the abdomen and locate the navel
- Place the thumb side of your fist against the abdomen just above the navel
- Grasp your fist with your other hand and thrust inward and upward into the victim's abdomen with quick jerks
- For a responsive pregnant victim, or any victim you cannot get your arms around or for whom abdominal thrusts are not effective, give chest thrusts from behind; avoid squeezing the ribs with your arms
- Continue thrusts until the victim expels the object or becomes unresponsive
- Even after choking stops, seek medical attention”

<http://www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/safety-at-home-choking.aspx>

If the victim is or becomes unresponsive, lower the person to the ground, expose the chest and start CPR.

**For children ages one (1) to eight (8) years old, the following steps for CPR should be performed:**

- Perform chest compressions:
- Place the heel of **one** hand on the breastbone -- just below the nipples. Make sure your heel is not at the very end of the breastbone.
- Keep your other hand on the child's forehead, keeping the head tilted back.
- Press down on the child's chest so that it compresses about 1/3 to 1/2 the depth of the chest.
- Give 30 chest compressions. Each time, let the chest rise completely. These compressions should be FAST and hard with no pausing. Count the 30 compressions quickly:  
"1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18,19,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30, off."

<http://umm.edu/health/medical/ency/presentations/cpr-child-1-to-8-years-old-series>

**For adults and children older than nine (9), the procedure for CPR is as follows:**

- Look inside the mouth and remove any objects.
- Tilt the head and lift the chin to open the airway
- Give two rescue breaths
- Keep your elbows straight and position your hands, one on top of the other, in the center of the chest
- Compress the chest about 2 inches deep, 30 times, at a rate of at least 100 per minute while counting aloud
- Continue the cycle of two breaths and 30 compressions until the victim wakes up, an AED is brought to the scene or professional help arrives.

For an interactive poster, which demonstrates how to perform CPR, see the following link:

<http://www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/CPR-Steps.aspx>

The New York State Department of Health's website contains resources for parents regarding choking prevention, including precautions that can be taken, a list of common choking hazards (foods as well as household items and toys), and other links to helpful websites. Please visit the following link to view these resources:

[https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury\\_prevention/choking\\_prevention\\_for\\_children.htm](https://www.health.ny.gov/prevention/injury_prevention/choking_prevention_for_children.htm)

To prevent choking in children, [keep small objects out of reach](#), cut food into small pieces and don't allow them to have hard candy. Young children should be supervised while eating and playing. For more special tips on childproofing your home, please see the following link:

<http://www.nsc.org/learn/safety-knowledge/Pages/Childproofing-Your-Home.aspx>