

Choking

Choking (also known as foreign body airway obstruction) is a life-threatening medical emergency characterized by the blockage of air passage into the lungs secondary to the inhalation or ingestion of food or another object.

Choking is caused by a mechanical obstruction of the airway that prevents normal breathing. This obstruction can be partial (allowing some air passage into the lungs) or complete (no air passage into the lungs). The disruption of normal breathing by choking deprives oxygen delivery to the body, resulting in asphyxia. Although oxygen stored in the blood and lungs can keep a person alive for several minutes after breathing stops, this sequence of events is potentially fatal. Choking was the fourth most common cause of unintentional injury-related death in the US in 2011.

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