What is an airway obstruction?

An airway obstruction is a blockage in any part of the airway. The airway is a complex system of tubes that transmits inhaled air from nose and mouth into your lungs. An obstruction may partially or totally prevent air from getting into lungs.

Some airway obstructions are minor, while others are life threatening emergencies.

Types of airway obstructions

The types of airway obstructions are classified based on where the obstruction occurs and how much it blocks:

- Upper airway obstructions occur in the area from your nose and lips to your larynx (voice box).
- Lower airway obstructions occur between your larynx and the narrow passageways of your lungs.
- Partial airway obstructions allow some air to pass. You can still breathe with a partial airway obstruction, but it's difficult.
- Complete airway obstructions don't allow any air to pass. You can't breathe if you have a complete airway obstruction.

Signs and symptoms of obstruction airway

- Cyanosis (bluish_ colored skin)
- Confusion
- Panic
- Alterations in normal breathing pattern, whether rapid or shallow breathing.
- Gasping for air
- wheezing
- unconsciousness

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What causes an airway obstruction?

- inhaling or swallowing a foreign object.
- small object lodged in the nose or mouth.
- allergic reaction.
- trauma to the airway from an accident.
- Swelling of the tongue or epiglottis(swallowing a tongue).
- Chronic obstruction pulmonary disease (COPD).
- respiratory illness that causes upper airway inflammation (diphtheria)

The epiglottis : is the flap of tissue that protects and covers your trachea to prevent food and foreign bodies from entering.

Diagnosis of obstruction airway

- X_ray
- Bronchoscopy
- Laryngoscopy
- CT scan of the head and neck or chest.

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Who is at risk for an airway obstruction?

Children have a higher risk of obstruction by foreign objects than adults. They have smaller airways and they're more likely to stick toys and other small objects in their noses and mouths. In addition, they may not chew food well before swallowing.

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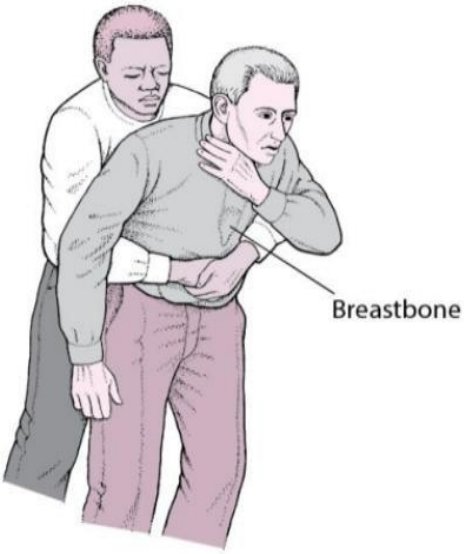
What the nursing care and treat of obstruction airway?

- Call 911
- Stand behind the person who is choking, wrapping your arms around their waist.
- Make a fist with one hand and puts it slightly above the person's belly button.
- Grab that fist with your other hand and press into the person's abdomen with five quick thrusts.
- Repeat these five abdominal thrusts until the object becomes dislodged or emergency services arrive.



In infant

five back slap with five chest thrust

***** Epinephrine can be used to treat airway swelling due to an allergic reaction.**

People who have severe allergies usually carry an EpiPen.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR)

CPR is used when a person is unable to breathe and has lost consciousness. It keeps oxygenated blood flowing to the brain until emergency services arrive.

To perform CPR:

- **Place the heel of your hand in the center of their chest.**
- **Place your other hand on top, and use your upper body weight to push straight down on the chest.**
- **You should do this about 100 to 120 timesTrusted Source per minute until an ambulance arrives.**