SUBJECT: MANAGEMENT OF FOREIGN-BODY AIRWAY OBSTRUCTION (CHOKING VICTIM)

1. PURPOSE:

To provide appropriate guidelines for the emergency care and treatment of the individual with a foreign-body airway obstruction (choking victim).

2. POLICY:

1. All personnel who have been trained in AHA (American Heart Association) may administer abdominal thrusts. Certification shall be in conjunction with basic cardiopulmonary resuscitation training.
2. All medical emergencies shall be responded to in a prompt and competent manner by all available nursing staff.
3. The most qualified staff member is in charge (regardless of Civil Service Classification) until relieved by a still more qualified person or the paramedics.
4. The Choking Assessment Form will be initiated by the RN for all choking incidents.

3. DEFINITION:

Management of foreign-body airway obstruction is a part of basic life support that consists of recognizing respiratory arrest. It involves the use of abdominal thrusts which is a technique used for unblocking an obstructed airway by giving forceful thrusts to the abdomen.

4. COMPETENCY/TRAINING:

All full contact and limited contact employees shall be trained in basic life support per and shall be renewed per hospital policy not exceeding two years.

5. ASSESSMENT:

1. Early recognition of airway obstruction is the key to successful outcome of the victim.
2. It is important to distinguish this emergency from fainting, stroke, heart attack, epilepsy, drug overdose, or other conditions that can cause sudden respiratory failure but are treated differently.

3. 

Symptoms of choking:
   A. Occurs while person is eating and suddenly becomes quiet with a look of alarm on his or her face.
   B. The victim cannot speak or breathe and becomes cyanotic.
   C. The victim may have poor (inadequate) air exchange initially as indicated by a weak ineffective cough, high-pitched noise while inhaling, increased respiratory difficulty, and possible cyanosis. A partial obstruction with poor air exchange should be treated as if it were a complete airway obstruction.
   D. The victim collapses (falls forward, passes out.)

6. **CONSCIOUS CHOKING ADULT:**

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<tr>
<th>Nursing Action</th>
<th>Key Points</th>
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<tr>
<td>A. Recognize the universal sign for choking. Ask the victim if he/she is choking and determine if the victim is able to speak or cough.</td>
<td>A. To perform chest thrusts, stand behind the victim and place your arms under the victim’s armpits to encircle the chest. Press with quick backward thrusts.</td>
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<td>B. Perform the abdominal thrust maneuver until the foreign body is expelled or the victim becomes unconscious.</td>
<td>B. Stand behind the victim and wrap your arms around the victim’s waist. Press fists into abdomen with quick inward and upward thrusts.</td>
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<td>C. For victims who are in advanced stages of pregnancy or are obese, apply chest thrusts.</td>
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7. **OBSTRUCTED AIRWAY (IF VICTIM IS OR BECOMES UNCONSCIOUS):**
   2. Open the airway utilizing the head tilt-chin lift method.

**NURSING ACTION**

A. Assess the victim for breathing. Look at the chest to rise, listen and feel for breathing for 5 to 10 seconds.

**KEY POINTS**
B. Check for foreign body. Finger sweep only if object is visible and in reach.

C. Attempt rescue breathing open airway and give two (2) deep breaths. Utilize a breathing device. **DO NOT USE MOUTH TO MOUTH.** If breaths are unsuccessful, reposition the head and try again.

D. Re-attempt ventilation. If unable to ventilate, repeat sequence until successful.

D. Alternate these maneuvers in rapid sequence:

   - Ventilation

E. After successfully clearing the obstructed airway and providing adequate ventilation, obtain a complete set of vital signs (including pain assessment), and pulse oximetry reading.

F. DOCUMENT. Complete all required documentation (e.g. S.I.R., Choking Assessment Form).

F. The RN shall initiate the “Choking Assessment Form” for all choking incidents.
ATTACHMENT:

#1 – CSH Post-Choking Assessment form

CROSS - REFERENCE:

A.D. # – Medical Emergency, NPPM # - Medical Emergency