

WEST MICHIGAN COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH

HEIMLICH MANEUVER PROTOCOL

The Heimlich maneuver is a first aid method for choking that you can use on adults. It is a quick and life-saving method, but you should only do it on conscious people. The goal of the Heimlich maneuver is to push air out of the lungs in a forceful “cough”. This “cough” should pop the blockage out of the airway.

The Heimlich maneuver should not be performed on someone who can still talk, breathe, or cough.

You can usually tell a person is choking if they can't speak, breathe, or cough.

Ask the person, “Are you choking?”

The universal sign for choking is holding your hands up and clutching your throat.

If a person is able to speak, cough, or breathe, do not attempt the Heimlich maneuver. Encourage the person to keep coughing. Sometime a strong cough can free the foreign object. Only perform the Heimlich maneuver if a person's life is in danger. If a person is unconscious, they should not receive the Heimlich maneuver. Instead, you should perform CPR.

To perform the Heimlich maneuver, follow these steps:

- *The first thing to do when someone is choking is to find out if the person is OK. Do this by asking loudly, “Are you ok? Can you breathe?”

- *If the person says “Yes”, do nothing. Do not do the Heimlich maneuver if the person can breathe and talk. This could make it worse.

- *If the person nods “NO”, do the Heimlich maneuver using the steps below.

- *Let the person know you are going to perform the Heimlich maneuver

- *Stand behind the person and put your arms around the waist

- *Place your clenched fist just above the person's navel(belly button). Grab your fist with your other hand.

- *Quickly pull inward and upward as if trying to lift the person up. Do this 5 times.

- *If the object is not dislodged with the Heimlich maneuver, do back blows. Deliver 5 blows to the person's back with the heel of your hand. Aim for the area between the shoulder blades

*Repeat until the object is dislodged.

*Call 911 if the person's face is turning red or blue

*Call 911 if the person can't talk

*Call 911 if the person is having trouble breathing or has noisy breathing

*The person is unconscious

Performing the Heimlich maneuver has its risks. The performer may accidentally break a rib(s) of the person choking. Therefore, the victim must seek medical attention afterwards.

Any questions/concerns call WMCMHS at 231-845-6294 and speak to Amy or Nicole W.