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Red Cross changes first aid training for choking



KOBTV.com

EXTRA

Bv: Todd Dukart KOBTV.com Extra

The American Red Cross is now teaching a different method for treating choking victims than just the Heimlich maneuver, and local instructors say it's much simpler.

Earlier this year, the Red Cross revised its standards for teaching first aid. Before the new standards, there were three different procedures - one for infants, another for children and yet

another for adults. But the procedure for children has become the preferred procedure for adults, too, putting the famed Heimlich maneuver - abdominal thrusts, as the Red Cross calls it - second

That's because, according to Red Cross instructor Phyllis White, it's simpler to remember.

At a first aid class for caregivers Saturday morning, White told KOBTV.com that the new procedure is to check the patient, call 911, get the victim's consent, and then alternate between five back blows and five abdominal thrusts

Because it can be difficult to do the procedure appropriately, it's a good idea to take a first aid class, White said.

Someone who's trained, she said, can save a life.

That happened just this month. A school bus driver in Socorro performed abdominal thrusts on an 11-year-old boy, who was choking on a piece of candy. The boy is doing fine, while the bus driver is being honored for her actions at next week's school board meeting

But few people are trained. Red Cross spokesperson Cathy Komo said only about 25,000 New Mexicans are trained in first aid out of nearly 2 million residents.

The Mid-Rio Grande chapter of the Red Cross holds a variety of training courses regularly, and offers online registration.

Online course registration



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