



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**American Heart Association and American Red Cross Statement:
Recommendation for treating choking in conscious adult victims**

The American Heart Association and American Red Cross have become aware of recent reports of changes in how to best relieve choking in conscious adults. These reports emphasize the new American Red Cross recommendation to use back slaps (back blows) as the first line of treatment and the American Heart Association's recommendation to use abdominal thrusts as the first line treatment.

Although correct in pointing out the differences in the recommended first line treatment, some of the media reports have not acknowledged the fact that the American Red Cross continues to recommend the use of abdominal thrusts if the initial use of back slaps does not successfully dislodge the foreign body that's blocking the conscious adult's airway.

The American Heart Association recommends the use of chest thrusts if the initial use of abdominal thrusts does not successfully dislodge the foreign body. (Chest thrusts are similar to abdominal thrusts but performed higher on the chest; the American Heart Association also recommends their use for pregnant women or people who are obese.)

For many years, no new compelling scientific evidence has suggested that any one technique as first line treatment is superior to another. In fact, the current international standard, developed by the International Liaison Committee on Resuscitation (ILCOR), states that a combination of more than one technique—abdominal thrusts, back slaps and chest thrusts—is generally needed.

The American Heart Association and American Red Cross are the two leading organizations training lay rescuers to do CPR, perform first aid and use automated external defibrillators (AEDs). Both are committed to training more people to respond to cardiovascular emergencies and to save more lives.