

Successful Resuscitation of Choking Victims Using a Lifevac, a Non-powered Portable Suction Device:

Abstract Category: Esophagus

Real World Experience

Abstract Type: Clinical Vignettes/Case Reports

Abstract Body

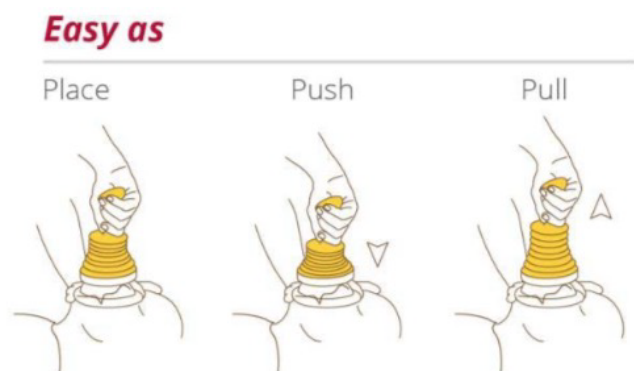
Abstract body

Choking is a leading cause of accidental death worldwide and in the United States. Patients with oropharyngeal dysphagia are at a high risk for aspiration of food and thus, choking. Although there have been great technological advances, currently, there is no approved device to assist in the resuscitation of a choking victim when abdominal thrusts fail. Recently, a portable, non powered suction device called LifeVac has been developed and introduced globally. This device consists of a one way valve and a plunger attached to a standard face mask. When the plunger is pushed down, air escapes out the sides of the valve and not into the victim's airway; when the plunger is pulled back, negative pressure is generated and it suctions out the lodged material. Here we report several real-life cases in which this apparatus has been successfully used to resuscitate a choking victim.

A care home in Wales obtained several LifeVac devices for their residents. During lunch, a resident of this care home began choking on a piece of meat, lost consciousness, began turning blue. A nurse in the home attempted usual methods of assistance without any success. Therefore, the LifeVac device was used according to directions, and with one pull, the meat piece was dislodged. A physician was then called. The physician examined the patient and noted no adverse effects. Additionally, no further intervention was required. The same care home reported that 1 week later, another patient suffered a similar episode and the device was again successfully used to dislodge a meat piece through suctioning into the unit.

In addition, a LifeVac device was obtained by a family in Idaho and was kept at home in case of a choking emergency. On April 23, 2017, a woman in her late 60s with no underlying medical condition began choking at the dinner table on a meat piece. She was unable to speak and was wheezing. Her son unsuccessfully attempted the Heimlich maneuver; thus the LifeVac device was used as per instructions, and with one pull the meat piece was dislodged into her mouth. She did not require further medical attention.

These dramatic real-life case reports demonstrate the utility of this non powered suction device. Certainly, these testimonials show that lives were saved and major morbidity and mortality avoided. Further studies are urgently needed as there is a need for such a suction device when abdominal thrusts fail to address choking.



Author(s): Lisa Lih-Brody, MD, FACP MD FACP Gastroenterology

Role: Presenting Author Amy Benenson, BS

Role: Author Rashawn Chin, PA-C RPA