

## LIFEVAC – FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

LifeVac is a medical device that is intended to rescue choking persons. It is designed with a patented valve to prevent any air from exiting through the mask, preventing air from pushing food or objects downward. This creates a one-way suction to remove the lodged food or object. According to the [LifeVac website](#), the device is used by thousands of law enforcement agencies, fire and EMS departments, and schools. It touts about 2,300 lives saved.

The LifeVac is an easy-to-use device that requires minimal training. Training is available virtually on the device's website.

LifeVac is FDA-registered as a Class II medical device. Currently, in the United States, all portable suction devices are only required to be registered with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA), not approved. The FDA does not require a pre-market review of the LifeVac device.

Neither the American Heart Association nor the Red Cross include LifeVac or other anti-choking devices in their protocols. In a statement, the Red Cross said, "As these devices have not been validated by the evidence, we do not provide training on how to use them."

There is no downside to having a LifeVac or other anti-choking device on hand, but traditional anti-choking techniques are much more effective than any device. "I would use these devices only if, after two to three rounds of standard choking care, it doesn't work," says [Dr. Darria Long](#), an emergency medicine physician.

It is encouraged everyone to learn the techniques (Heimlich maneuver, abdominal and chest thrusts in children and adults, and back blows and chest thrusts for infants) to clear obstructed airways. American Heart Association, Red Cross, and American Safety and Health Institute training centers offer classes. Contact your local hospital or emergency response agency for contact information.

Prevention is still the best anti-choking strategy. For adults, follow these best practices:

- Cut food into small pieces.
- Chew food slowly and thoroughly, especially if wearing dentures.
- Don't laugh and talk while chewing or swallowing.
- Don't drink lots of alcohol before and during meals.

Some best practices to prevent choking in children include:

- Avoid certain foods, especially for children under 4 years old, such as nuts and seeds, cherries and grapes, and hard candy. Cut food into small pieces.
- Children should eat sitting down. Do not allow them to run or play sports. Be cautious when allowing young children to ride in the car with gum, candy, or lollipops.
- Be aware that small toys or pieces of toys, can become choke hazards. Read toy labels. Button batteries are becoming a growing problem.
- Monitor children during meals, snacks, and play.
- Teach older siblings these safety measures.

