

Kid Heroes Use the Heimlich Maneuver



Sam and Raymond Barrera had just returned home from sports practice. Their grandmother greeted them with a plate of tacos, so each boy grabbed one. After a few bites, eight-year-old Raymond started choking on his taco. He couldn't talk. He couldn't breathe. That's when his brother Sam jumped into action.

"When I saw what was happening, I just put down my taco and walked over to him," Sam said. "I put my arms around him, found the belly button, and pulled in and up." After only a few thrusts, a piece of taco shell flew out of Raymond's mouth.

Raymond was lucky. Fifteen-year-old Sam had taken an online health class and knew just what to do. He did the Heimlich maneuver on Raymond and possibly saved his life.

What happened to Sam and Raymond last month was very special -- but what makes this story even more surprising is that Sam saved his teacher's life just six months ago. He performed the Heimlich maneuver on her when she was choking on an almond.

NEWS WORD BOX

Heimlich maneuver
thrust uncomfortable
performed almond
paramedic basics

Sam says he is a little uncomfortable with all the attention he has gotten because he saved two people's lives. But his actions have helped him to see his future. After saving his teacher, Sam signed up for classes that teach the basics of firefighting. He hopes to become a firefighter and paramedic.

MORE KIDS IN THE NEWS

- Last month, one Texas school honored 13-year-old Basilio Rocha. Basilio was in the bathroom at school one day when another boy ran in. The boy was choking after taking a gulp of a muffin. "I was scared big time," Basilio told the *Dallas News*. "I started to do the Heimlich... After five to six tries, the muffin finally came up."
- In Colorado last month, 13-year old Gabe Valentine may have saved the life of a friend who started choking on food at lunchtime. Gabe learned the Heimlich maneuver two years ago when he took a "Safe Sitter" baby-sitting class.

EXPLORE THE NEWS

Learn more about how to do the Heimlich maneuver. Then write in your own words the steps you would take if someone is choking.