
Learning about...

ANAPHYLAXIS

What is anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is a severe, life threatening allergic reaction, which may occur in certain people with allergy, after being exposed to a food, medication, insect sting, latex and sometimes exercise.

**This is a major medical emergency that may affect the whole body.
It must be treated right away.**

What are the symptoms of anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis means that multiple parts of the body are involved in the allergic reaction. Any of the following symptoms can be part of an anaphylactic reaction; usually patients will have **more than one**:

- **Face:** itchy eyes or nose, flushed face, swollen lips or tongue, a metallic taste in the mouth
- **Throat:** itchy, tight or hoarse throat, dry or hacking cough, trouble swallowing or choking
- **Skin:** itchy or red skin, hives, swelling anywhere on the body
- **Chest and Lungs:** tightness in chest, trouble breathing, shortness of breath, wheezing, coughing
- **Stomach:** stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
- **All over:** dizziness, fainting, feeling unsteady or sleepy

How is anaphylaxis treated?

1. **If you or another person may be having anaphylaxis, administer the EpiPen or Twinject right away even if you are not sure.** Using the EpiPen or Twinject will not cause any harm.
2. Always go to the hospital as the reaction may get worse. It is best to call **911**.
3. If there are still symptoms after 10 - 15 minutes, give the 2nd dose from the Twinject or give another injection from a second EpiPen.

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Helpful hints to protect yourself:

- It is best for you to avoid the things and situations that are known to trigger severe allergic symptoms.
- Always carry your EpiPen or Twinject and have it available. Friends and family should know how and when to use it.
- Review yourself the proper use of the epinephrine autoinjector device on a regular basis.
- Wear a MedicAlert bracelet outlining your allergies
- If someone in the home is allergic to a food such as peanut, do not bring anything containing that food into the house.
- When you have a food allergy and eat out, talk to the server and ask about menu items. Read food labels carefully. - Remember: NO EPI NO EATIE! (in other words, if you didn't prepare the food yourself, don't eat without having your Epinephrine Autoinjector on hand).
- If you are allergic to medications, consult your pharmacist prior to taking any new medications, including those you can buy over the counter.
- If you have had a reaction after an insect sting, you may need allergy shots for insect allergy.
- If allergic to insect stings, do not go barefoot. Do not wear perfume or bright coloured clothes outdoors as these can attract insects.