

ANAPHYLAXIS

(Allergic Shock)



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

A life-threatening allergic response to medications and many other allergy-causing substances. Reactions that occur almost immediately tend to be the most severe.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Any of the following may occur within seconds or a few minutes after exposure to a substance to which you are very allergic:

- Tingling or numbness around the mouth.
- Sneezing.
- Coughing or wheezing.
- Swelling around face or hands.
- Feeling of anxiety.
- Weak, rapid pulse.
- Stomach cramps, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- Itching all over, often accompanied by hives.
- Watery eyes.
- Tightness in the chest; difficult breathing.
- Swelling or itching in the mouth or throat.
- Pounding heart.
- Faintness.
- Loss of consciousness.

Not all symptoms occur. Seek immediate help for any.

CAUSES

Eating or receiving injections of something to which you are sensitive. The allergic response to neutralize or get rid of the material results in a life-threatening overreaction. Things that cause reactions most often include:

- Medication of all types, especially penicillin. Injections are much riskier than oral or eye drop medications.
- Stings or bites from insects, such as bees, wasps, hornets, biting ants and some spiders.
- Vaccines.
- Pollen.
- Injected chemicals used in some types of X-ray studies.
- Foods, especially eggs, beans, seafood and fruit.
- Exercise.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- A previous mild allergic response to things listed above.
- Medical history of eczema, hay fever or asthma.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

If you have an allergic history:

- Tell the doctor or dentist before accepting any medication. Before you are given a shot, ask what it is.
- Keep an anaphylaxis kit, such as Ana-Kit, with you at all times. Be sure your family knows how to use the kit if you have a reaction.

- If allergic to insect stings, wear protective clothing when outside.
- Wear a medical alert type bracelet or pendant warning that you are allergic.
- Always remain in the doctor's office 15 minutes after receiving any injection. Report any symptoms immediately.
- Consider desensitization shots.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Full recovery with prompt treatment.

GENERAL MEASURES

Without prompt treatment, anaphylaxis can cause shock, cardiac arrest, and death.



TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- If you observe signs of anaphylaxis in someone and he or she stops breathing:

Call or have someone call 911 (emergency) or call 0 (operator) for an ambulance or medical help. (If the victim is a child, perform lifesaving measures for 1 minute before calling for emergency help.)

Begin mouth-to-mouth breathing immediately.

If there is no heartbeat, give external cardiac massage.

Don't stop CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation) until help arrives.

- Be alert to the possibility of a reaction when taking any medicine, and be prepared to respond quickly if symptoms occur. If you have had a previous severe allergic reaction, always carry your anaphylaxis kit.
- Long-term treatment involves desensitization therapy.

MEDICATIONS

- Epinephrine by injection is the only effective immediate treatment.
- Aminophylline, cortisone drugs or antihistamines, given after the epinephrine, help prevent the return of acute symptoms.

ACTIVITY

Resume your normal activities as soon as symptoms improve after an attack. Stay under someone's observation for 24 hours in case symptoms recur.

DIET

Avoid foods to which you are allergic.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

- You or a family member has symptoms of anaphylaxis. This is an emergency! Get emergency help immediately.
- New, unexplained symptoms develop. Drugs used in treatment may produce side effects.