



ANAPHYLAXIS

(Allergic Shock)



BASIC INFORMATION

DESCRIPTION

A life-threatening allergic response to drugs or any other allergy-causing substance. Reactions that happen the fastest are often the worst.

FREQUENT SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Any of the following can happen in seconds or a few minutes after being exposed to something that you are very allergic to:

- Tingling or numbness around the mouth.
- Sneezing, coughing, or wheezing.
- Swelling around the face or hands.
- Feeling of anxiousness.
- Weak, rapid pulse.
- Stomach cramps, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- Itching all over. Hives often appear.
- Watery eyes.
- Chest feels tight; difficulty breathing.
- Swelling or itching in the mouth or throat.
- Pounding heartbeat.
- Faintness; loss of consciousness.

Not all symptoms occur. Seek immediate help for any of them.

CAUSES

- Sometimes the body overreacts when it tries to rid itself of the material to which it is allergic. This can be life-threatening. Things that most often cause reactions:
- Drugs of all types, especially penicillin. Shots are a bigger risk than eyedrops or drugs taken by mouth.
- 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.

RISK INCREASES WITH

- A previous mild allergy to things listed above.
- A history of rashes, hay fever, or asthma.

PREVENTIVE MEASURES

If you have an allergic history:

- Tell your health care provider before you accept any new drugs. Before you are given a shot, ask what it is.
- Keep a special kit, such as Ana-Kit or EpiPen, with you at all times. Be sure your family knows how to use the kit if you need it.
- If you are allergic to insect stings, wear clothing that covers all of your body when you are outside.
- Wear a medical alert bracelet or necklace warning that you have allergies.
- Always remain in a medical office 15 minutes after receiving any shot. Report any symptoms right away.
- Consider allergy therapy that can make you less allergic.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES

Full recovery (if treated quickly).

POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS

If not treated quickly, anaphylaxis can cause shock, cardiac arrest, and/or death.



DIAGNOSIS & TREATMENT

GENERAL MEASURES

- If you see signs of anaphylaxis in someone and they stop breathing:

Call 911 (emergency) 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 right away.

If their heart is not beating, give CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

Don't stop CPR until help arrives.

- Be aware that a reaction may happen when taking any medicine. Be ready to respond quickly if symptoms develop. If you have had a severe allergic reaction in the past, always carry your anaphylaxis kit.
- Long-term treatment involves therapy to make your body less sensitive to things to which you are allergic.

MEDICATIONS

- Epinephrine shots are the only immediate treatment for this condition.
- Other drugs may be given after the epinephrine that will help prevent the return of symptoms.

ACTIVITY

Return to your normal activities as soon as symptoms are better. Make sure you are not

alone for 24 hours, in case symptoms come back.

DIET

Avoid foods to which you are allergic.



NOTIFY OUR OFFICE IF

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