



Anaphylaxis

What is anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis (*an-a-fi-LAK-sis*) is a serious allergic reaction that can cause death. It can happen in people who have allergies or asthma, and it may be caused by a number of normally harmless things called allergens. Most often it is caused by foods, insect stings and medicines.

Anaphylactic signs (or symptoms) usually do not happen the first time you are near the allergen. That's because it can take some time for your body to build up a dislike for the allergen.

Signs of anaphylaxis usually start in 5 to 30 minutes of coming in contact with the allergen. But, sometimes symptoms can begin after 1 hour. An anaphylactic reaction can make it hard to breathe, or cause you to pass out. It can even cause death. That's why anaphylaxis is always an emergency.

It is important to know when anaphylaxis is happening, how to treat it and how to stop it from happening again.

What are the signs of anaphylaxis?

Signs of anaphylaxis usually include several of the following:

- A red rash, with welts, that usually is itchy.
- Swollen throat or swollen areas of the body.
- Wheezing (breathing that sounds like whistling from your chest).
- Passing out.
- Chest tightness.
- Trouble breathing.
- A hoarse voice.
- Trouble swallowing.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- Abdominal cramping.
- A pale or red color to the face and body.

Anaphylaxis is a dangerous medical emergency that can lead to death. If you think you or your child may be having an anaphylactic reaction, call 9-1-1 to get immediate help.

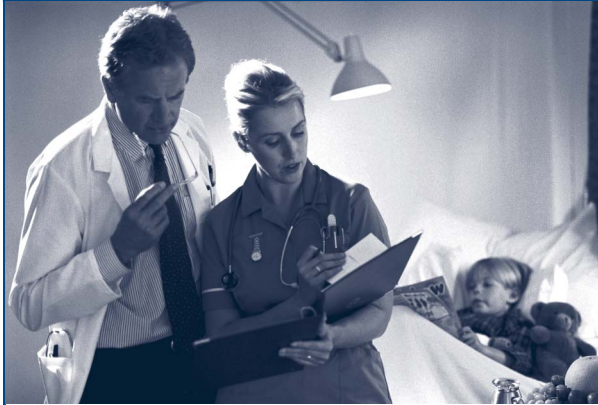
Is anaphylaxis common?

Each year, about 40 people die after an anaphylactic reaction to insect stings, and about 100 people die from reactions to food.



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ALLERGY
ASTHMA & IMMUNOLOGY

611 East Wells Street
Milwaukee, WI 53202
Phone: (414) 272-6071
Fax: (414) 272-6070
E-mail: info@aaaai.org
Web site: www.aaaai.org



Anaphylaxis

How do you treat anaphylaxis?

If you have an anaphylactic reaction, you should see an allergist/immunologist to write a treatment plan for your allergies. An allergist/immunologist is a doctor who has special training to treat allergies and asthma.

The treatment plan will help you figure out how to avoid the allergens that could lead to anaphylaxis:

- If you have food allergies, avoid those foods. Milk, eggs, peanuts, wheat, soy, fish, shellfish and tree nuts are the foods that most often cause anaphylaxis in people who are allergic to these foods.
- If you are allergic to latex, do not use natural rubber latex products, such as gloves or balloons.
- If you have severe insect allergy, avoid spending time outside during insect season. Ask your doctor about receiving insect venom immunotherapy (allergy shots) to protect you against future reactions.

If you are so severely allergic to something that it can trigger an anaphylactic reaction, you will probably always need to be on the lookout for that trigger and carry epinephrine that can be used to control anaphylaxis. This comes in two forms, EpiPen or EpiPen Jr. and is given as a shot. If your child is old enough to responsibly use an EpiPen or EpiPen Jr., he or she should always have one close by.

If you have think you may be having an anaphylactic reaction, you should:

- 1) Use your EpiPen if you have one.
- 2) Call 9-1-1, even if you think your reaction is under control.

An allergist/immunologist can answer other questions you might have about anaphylaxis. Visit www.aaaai.org for more information on allergies.



AMERICAN ACADEMY OF ALLERGY
ASTHMA & IMMUNOLOGY

555 E. Wells St., Ste. 1100
Milwaukee, WI 53202-3823

Phone: (414) 272-6071

Fax: (414) 272-6070

E-mail: info@aaaai.org

Web site: www.aaaai.org