

SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTION (ANAPHYLAXIS)



Managing a severe allergic reaction

Signs & symptoms

Watch for any one of the following for anaphylaxis—

- difficulty and/or noisy breathing
- swelling of the tongue
- swelling/tightness of the throat
- difficulty talking and/or hoarse voice
- wheezing and/or coughing
- persistent dizziness or collapse
- in young children — pale and floppy

Mild to moderate reaction (may precede anaphylaxis):

- swelling of the lips, face, eyes
- hives or welts
- tingling mouth
- abdominal pain and vomiting

WARNING

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction and potentially life-threatening—always treat as a medical emergency.

Management

▼ Conscious patient

1. Follow DRSABCD

- Help patient to sit or lie in a position that assists breathing

2. If the patient is carrying an auto-injector (e.g. Epipen®, AnaPen®), it should be used at once

- Let the patient administer the auto-injector themselves, or ask if they require assistance to do so

3. Call triple zero (000) for an ambulance

4. Keep patient in lying or sitting position

- observe and record pulse and breathing

5. If no response after 5 minutes, further adrenaline may be given.

▼ Unconscious patient

1. Immediately administer the adrenaline autoinjector, if available

2. Follow DRSABCD.

See www.allergy.org.au for further information.

In an emergency, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance

For more information on St John first aid training and kits, visit www.stjohn.org.au or freecall 1300 360 455