

Emergency Management of Anaphylaxis

An anaphylactic reaction can involve **any** of the following symptoms, which may appear alone or in any combination:

- **Skin system:** hives, swelling, itching, warmth, redness, rash
- **Respiratory system (breathing):** coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, chest pain/tightness, throat tightness, hoarse voice, nasal congestion or hay fever-like symptoms (runny, itchy nose and watery eyes, sneezing), trouble swallowing
- **Gastrointestinal system (stomach):** nausea, pain/cramps, vomiting, diarrhea
- **Cardiovascular system (heart):** pale/blue colour, weak pulse, passing out, dizzy/lightheaded, shock
- **Other:** anxiety, feeling of “impending doom”, headache, uterine cramps, metallic taste

Individual displays signs/symptoms of a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction (anaphylaxis).



Immediately proceed with five steps of the Emergency Protocol:

1. **Give epinephrine auto-injector** (e.g. EpiPen® or Twinject®) at the first sign of a known or suspected anaphylactic reaction.
2. **Call 9-1-1** or local emergency medical services. Tell them someone is having a life-threatening allergic reaction.
3. **Give a second dose** of epinephrine in 5 to 15 minutes **IF** the reaction continues or worsens.
4. **Go to the nearest hospital immediately (ideally by ambulance)**, even if symptoms are mild or have stopped. The reaction could worsen or come back, even after proper treatment. Stay in the hospital for an appropriate period of observation as decided by the emergency department physician (generally about 4 hours).
5. **Call emergency contact person (e.g. parent, guardian).**



Upon discharge from hospital, the patient should:

- Obtain an epinephrine auto-injector prescription and immediately fill it.
- Schedule a follow up appointment with his or her physician. If not already under the care of an allergist, the patient should obtain a referral.