

Anaphylactic Shock

Definition:

Anaphylactic shock is a severe allergic reaction that may happen after an insect or bug bite, after eating certain allergic foods, or taking any medication that may trigger an allergy. The reaction is quick and can occur within seconds or minutes.

During an anaphylactic effect, substances are released into the blood; blood vessels become dilated, which causes blood pressure to fall. Air passages then constrict, resulting in breathing difficulties. The tongue and throat can swell, obstructing the airway.

Anaphylactic shock is a life-threatening condition that requires immediate medical attention.

Signs and symptoms:

- Anxiety
- Breathing difficulties and wheezing
- Red skin or itchy rash
- Swollen face, neck, hands, and feet
- Swelling of tongue and throat
- Puffiness around the eyes
- Tachycardia
- Abdominal pain
- Vomiting and diarrhea

Treatment:

If you think a person is suffering from an anaphylactic reaction, follow the steps below:

- Give an EpiPen injection. If not available, give an adrenaline injection intramuscularly or subcutaneously (weight between 15- 30 kg: administer 0.15 ml; weight above 30 kg: 0.3 ml).
- Note the time the injection was given.
- Monitor vital signs.
- Send the patient to the nearest ER.

Instructions for using EpiPen:

- Form a fist around the pen and remove the safety release cap.
- Place the end of the pen against the outer mid-thigh (with or without clothing).
- Push down hard until a click is heard or felt, and hold the pen in place for 10 seconds.
- Remove the pen and massage the injection site for 10 seconds.
- Properly dispose of the used device in a sharp container.