Protocol

Treatment of Allergic Reactions/Prevent Allergic Reactions with Benadryl (Diphenhydramine)

Allergic reactions can occur with any substance that the body perceives as foreign, but commonly to foods, insect stings, latex, or other known allergens to specific individuals. Symptoms that signal the onset of an allergic reaction include: urticaria, flushing, generalized itching, tearing. More ominous signs may include swelling of the lips, tongue, and throat, swelling of the hands and feet, wheezing, difficulty breathing, coughing, hoarseness, headache, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, sense of impending doom, hypotension, loss of consciousness and death. Anaphylactic reactions are addressed in the protocol for the treatment of anaphylaxis with epinephrine. Initial allergic symptoms may appear within seconds or up to two hours after exposure.

Protocol:

All school nurses will have dye-free diphenhydramine (Benadryl) available for use in the schools. Administration of diphenhydramine (Benadryl) by mouth may be effective in countering the effects of a mild allergic reaction. Treatment for seasonal allergies are not included. It is within the scope of practice for professional registered nurses in the state of North Carolina to be able to recognize the signs and symptoms of allergic reactions and to administer diphenhydramine to persons who exhibit these symptoms.

Management Guidelines for Allergic Reactions Following a Sting

1. In the event of a reported sting of a student, staff member or visitor to the school, the school nurse will:
    A. Obtain a history of the sting victim's past reaction to stings.
    B. Determine if there is evidence of a sting and remove the stinger if one is present.
    C. Apply ice to the sting site to slow absorption of venom.
    D. Advise observation of the person for 2 hours for any sign of an allergic reaction.
    E. Verbal permission from the parent/guardian (in the case of a minor) should be obtained first before administering diphenhydramine (Benadryl). Parent will give written permission within 24 hours of administering.

2. If the school nurse determines that the sting victim is having signs of a minor allergic reaction, she will administer diphenhydramine (Benadryl), following approved procedure.

Management Guidelines for Allergic Reactions Following Exposure to Other Antigens

1. In the event of an allergic response to a known or unknown antigen in a student, staff member or a visitor to the school, the school nurse will:
   A. Obtain a history of the victim's past allergic response.
   B. Determine if there was exposure to an antigen.
   C. Advise observation of the person for 2 hours for any sign of an allergic reaction.
   D. Verbal permission from the parent/guardian (in the case of a minor) should be obtained first before administering diphenhydramine (Benadryl). Parent will give written permission within 24 hours of administering.

2. Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) administration at school does not include treatment for seasonal allergies.

3. If the school nurse determines that the victim is having signs of a mild allergic reaction, she will administer diphenhydramine (Benadryl) following approved procedure.

Prescribed Dosages:

Diphenhydramine is given according to the child's weight. Follow the package directions in determining the amount to be given to the child.

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Date

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