

# Anaphylaxis and Food Allergies



Children's<sup>®</sup>  
Healthcare of Atlanta

Awareness

CHILD HEALTH AND WELLNESS

ANAPHYLAXIS IS A SUDDEN, SEVERE, LIFE-THREATENING ALLERGIC REACTION. In extreme cases, it can cause death.

## CAUSES OF ANAPHYLAXIS

- Food allergies
- Severe allergic reaction to bee stings, wasps or fire ants
- Latex allergy
- Medications (both new and long-term)

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS?

<b>MOUTH</b>	Itching and swelling of the lips, tongue or mouth
<b>THROAT*</b>	Itching and/or a sense of tightness in the throat, hoarseness and hacking cough
<b>SKIN</b>	Hives, itchy rash and/or swelling of the face or extremities
<b>STOMACH</b>	Nausea, abdominal cramps, vomiting and/or diarrhea
<b>LUNG*</b>	Hoarseness, shortness of breath, repetitive coughing and/or wheezing
<b>HEART*</b>	Faint pulse, passing out

\* If a child has asthma and severe allergies, he is at a higher risk for a severe allergic reaction.

All of the above symptoms can potentially progress to a life-threatening situation. **SEVERITY OF SYMPTOMS CAN CHANGE QUICKLY.**

## HOW CAN I TREAT ANAPHYLAXIS?

The EpiPen<sup>®</sup> auto-injector is a one-time use disposable drug delivery system. It provides short-term relief to people with severe allergic reactions. It is available by prescription only. Practice with an EpiPen trainer before you need to use one.

**The effects of the EpiPen only last for 10-20 minutes – then symptoms may return. So you MUST call 911 immediately after injection.**

## SCHOOL MANAGEMENT

- **Identify** students at risk and work closely with staff and parents.
- **Inquire** about food allergies or other life-threatening allergies, especially if an EpiPen is **not** listed as a medication. Suggest that parents work with a healthcare provider to develop an emergency plan and to determine if their child needs an EpiPen.
- **Inform** teachers and other staff about students with severe allergies. Include everyone who comes in contact with the affected children. Request parental permission to share this information. School staff members who need to be informed of children with severe allergies include:
  - School nurse
  - Office staff
  - Bus drivers
  - Music teachers
  - Computer teachers
  - Administrators
  - Cafeteria staff
  - P.E. teachers
  - Classroom teachers
  - Media center staff

## EMERGENCY PLANS

- If you have a student in your school with an EpiPen, get a copy of their emergency plan.
- Inform the parents that you have reviewed their child's plan and that you have emergency procedures in place for your teachers, staff and substitute teachers.

## WHY SHOULD A NEW EMERGENCY PLAN BE FILLED OUT EVERY YEAR?

- Complete and up-to-date medical information from both parent and healthcare provider help ensure the safety and well-being of the child

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*This general healthcare information should not be used as a substitute or in place of contacting your child's healthcare provider. If you need further assistance, call 404.250.kids to speak to a pediatric nurse. For more information check out our Web site at [www.choa.org](http://www.choa.org) and click on "for professionals" or "your child's health."*

- To ensure contact numbers are up-to-date
- To ensure that the correct version of EpiPen is being used. EpiPen Jr. is for children who weigh between 33 and 66 pounds, and EpiPen is for children who weigh 66 pounds or more.

## TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION WHEN A CHILD HAS SEVERE ALLERGIES

### • Food allergies

- Letter from parent to other parents in the classroom explaining the situation
- Letter to the “room mother”
- Field trips require planning:
  - Always bring the emergency plan together with the EpiPen (and other medications listed on the emergency plan)
  - Have access to a cell phone to dial 911 if needed
  - Know the address of the field trip location so EMS can get to you if needed

### • Insect stings

- Have access to EpiPen during outdoor activities
  - During the school day
  - Field trips
  - After-school programs
  - Recess
  - Physical education class
  - Field days
- Inspect school grounds for fire ant mounds, bee hives and wasp nests frequently

### • Latex allergies

- Keep a small supply of latex-free gloves and adhesive bandages when a student has a known latex allergy.
- Higher risk for severe latex allergy is associated with students who have repeated exposures to products that contain latex. (i.e. spina bifida)

For more information on EpiPen, visit [www.choa.org](http://www.choa.org).

### Resource for implementing a plan of action for food-allergic students at your school:

The Food Allergy Network  
[www.foodallergy.net](http://www.foodallergy.net)

### For information on becoming CPR-certified:

Contact your local chapter of the American Red Cross or the American Heart Association.



*Children's Healthcare of Atlanta enhances the lives of children through excellence in patient care, research and education. With 430 licensed beds in two hospitals and more than 15,500 annual inpatient visits, Children's is one of the largest pediatric healthcare systems in the country. In 2001, Children's earned a score of 95 from the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations. Children's is recognized for excellence in cardiology, cancer treatment, transplant services and many other pediatric specialties. As a nonprofit organization, Children's benefits from the generous philanthropic and volunteer support of our community and state, enabling us to enhance services and programs for children and their families. To learn more about Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, visit the Web site at [www.choa.org](http://www.choa.org) or call 404.250.kids.*

