

# Allergic Reaction: Anaphylaxis

Runny nose, itchy eyes, sneezing, and hives are common symptoms if you're allergic to certain foods, pollen or dust.

But some people can have a serious, life threatening allergic reaction to things like nuts, shellfish and bee stings. This is called Anaphylaxis.

Anaphylaxis can happen seconds or minutes after you've been exposed to something you're allergic to. In some cases, symptoms may start an hour or more after exposure.

Your symptoms may be mild at first, but they can quickly become more serious. If you ever have one of these reactions, you will need to treat it right away.

In a person without allergies, your immune system protects you from germs and disease. But when you do have allergies, your immune system mistakenly treats something like a specific food as if it's really dangerous to you.

In response, your immune system releases histamines and other chemicals to deal with the danger. These chemicals are what cause allergy symptoms.

With Anaphylaxis, your blood pressure drops suddenly and your airways narrow making it hard to breathe. Some common causes of anaphylaxis include certain foods like peanuts, tree nuts like almonds and walnuts, milk, eggs, fish, and shellfish.

It can also be caused by medicines and insect stings.

If you have asthma, you're more likely to be at risk.

Your symptoms may affect your body all at once. Or they may start with hives or itching.

But within a few minutes, you may have more serious symptoms including:

Trouble breathing; redness and swelling around the eyes; swollen tongue, feeling of tightness in your throat or trouble swallowing; racing heart; wheezing; nausea or vomiting; diarrhea; belly cramps or pain; low blood pressure; fainting or dizziness; and feelings of anxiety or doom.

Anaphylaxis is an emergency. To treat it, you will need to take a medicine called epinephrine as soon as possible. It's given by an auto-injector or nasal spray.

Your doctor will tell you how and when to use it, and when a second epinephrine dose is needed. Call 911 as soon as you take the first dose. Call 911 even if you start feeling better.

If you're at risk for anaphylaxis, work with your doctor to make an emergency action plan. Your plan should include recognizing the signs and symptoms of anaphylaxis.

Keep two doses of epinephrine with you at all times and make sure your family and friends know how to use them.

# Allergic Reaction: Anaphylaxis

Talk regularly with your doctor or allergist about your plan, and update it as needed, and always carry identification, or wear jewelry that lists your allergies and any medical conditions.

Anaphylaxis is life-threatening.

Keep track of your triggers so you can treat it as soon as you have a reaction.