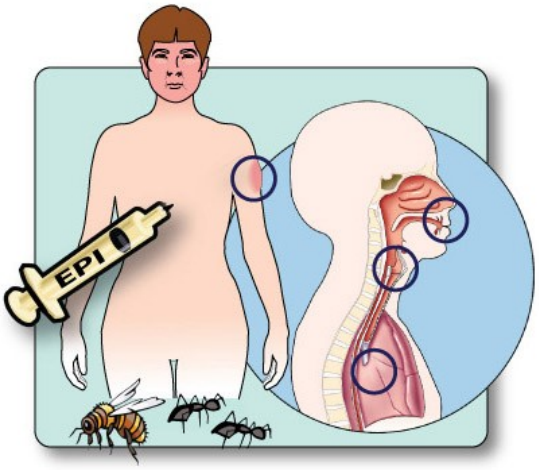
Anaphylactic Reaction

An anaphylactic reaction is a severe allergic reaction. It may be caused by medicines, food, insect bites, or other common items. It cannot spread from one person to another (*contagious*). It can be life threatening and require hospitalization.

SYMPTOMS

Symptoms may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Skin rash or hives.
- Itching.
- Chest tightness.
- Swelling (including the eyes, tongue, or lips).
- Trouble breathing or swallowing.
- Lightheadedness or fainting.
- Stomach pains and/or vomiting.



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Symptoms may gradually disappear when you are no longer around the substance that caused the problem. You may find that 2 or 3 days are needed for symptoms to go away completely.

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Carry a card or wear a bracelet that lists anything that has caused past anaphylaxis or a less severe allergic reaction.
- If 1 or more medicines have caused past problems, you need to avoid the same or similar medicines in the future.
- Talk with a medical caregiver before using any new prescription or over-the-counter medicines.
- If you develop hives or a rash:
  - Apply cold compresses to the skin, or take a cool bath to help reduce itching.
  - Avoid hot baths or showers. This might make itching or the rash worse.
  - Wear loose fitting clothes.
- If you have had a **severe** allergic reaction in the past:
  - Carry an anaphylaxis kit with you at all times. Both you and family members should be shown how to give the medicines in the kit. This can be life-saving if there is another severe reaction. If it needs to be used, and symptoms improve, it is still important for you to seek immediate medical care or call your local Emergency Services (911 in the U.S.). This is because severe symptoms can return when the medicine in the kit wears off.
  - If hospitalization is not required, you should have fast access to Emergency Services if the problem recurs. If a family member or friend has been shown how to give the medicines in an anaphylaxis kit and can stay with you, he/she can also help give the medicines from the kit if problems return.
  - Make sure you renew your anaphylaxis kit when it gets close to being out of date.
- You may return to your normal activities when the allergic symptoms are gone.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You develop symptoms of an allergic reaction to a new substance. Symptoms may occur right away or minutes later.
- Rash, hives, or itching occurs.
- You have different symptoms than you have had previously.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have difficulty breathing, start to wheeze, or a tight feeling in the chest or throat develops.

- You develop swelling of the mouth or tongue or swelling and/or itching over most of your body.
- You develop severe stomach pains and/or repeated vomiting.
- You feel very lightheaded or pass out.
- Chest pain develops or there is a worsening of problems noted above. **THIS IS AN EMERGENCY**. **Call your local emergency services (911 in the U.S.).**

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you have recurrent problems or have problems that are getting worse.

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