

# Discharge Instructions for Anaphylactic Shock



You have been diagnosed with a serious allergic reaction. It's known as anaphylactic shock or anaphylaxis. This reaction often happens within minutes of exposure to an allergen. But it can be delayed for hours. Common causes of anaphylactic shock include:

- Foods such as milk, eggs, or peanuts
- Medicines such as penicillin
- IV (intravenous) contrast dyes used for some X-rays and scans
- Bee sting
- Latex products

Symptoms of anaphylactic shock can include:

- Coughing, wheezing, or shortness of breath
- Throat itching, tightness, or trouble swallowing
- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Red, itchy rash (hives), or swelling
- Dizziness, confusion, or passing out because of a sudden drop in blood pressure
- Less oxygen reaches your brain and other organs, and your body goes into shock

Anaphylactic shock can cause death if not treated quickly

## Home care

In rare cases, anaphylactic shock can return within 24 to 48 hours. There is no way to predict if this will happen. Call 911 right away if your anaphylaxis symptoms return.

Tips for home care include:

- Ask your healthcare provider about carrying an epinephrine autoinjector. This is a single-dose injection of epinephrine (adrenaline). This medicine will help to stop an allergic reaction until you can get medical help.
- Ask your provider for an Anaphylaxis Action Plan.
- Learn how to use your epinephrine autoinjector. There are different types of injectors available. Each will come with instructions. But have your provider or pharmacist show you how to use it.
- Always carry two epinephrine autoinjectors. You sometimes need a second dose in 5 to 15 minutes if your symptoms are not getting better or start coming back.
- Check the expiration date of your epinephrine autoinjectors regularly. Don't leave them in the car. They can get overheated or freeze.
- Stay away from the things that cause your allergic reaction whenever possible.
- If you have a food allergy, always ask about ingredients when eating food made by others. At a restaurant, tell your server about your food allergies. Read all food labels for your allergen.

- Wear a medical identification bracelet with the information about your allergy. Ask your healthcare provider how to get one.
- Tell your family, friends, and coworkers what to do if you have a severe allergic reaction. Include:
  - **How to use the epinephrine autoinjector.** Tell them to give you the shot if you can't.
  - **How to position you during a reaction.** You should be lying down with your legs raised.
  - **When to call 911.** They should call right away.
  - **When to start CPR.** They should start CPR if you stop breathing.
- Tell all of your healthcare providers about your allergies.

## Follow-up care

Make a follow-up appointment with your healthcare provider.

## Call 911

Call 911 right away if you have:

- Fainting or loss of consciousness
- Fast pulse
- Trouble breathing or wheezing
- Nausea or vomiting
- Swelling of your lips, tongue, or throat
- Itchy, blotchy skin or hives
- Pale, cool, damp skin
- Drowsiness
- Confusion

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