

Children's Emergency Department

Allergic Reaction and Anaphylaxis



Allergic reactions occur when the immune system reacts to something in the environment that is normally harmless for example food, pollen or animal fur. Symptoms may be localised or generalised and range from mild to severe.

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of an allergic reaction and is a life threatening medical emergency. The most common causes of allergy and anaphylaxis in young children are eggs, peanuts and nuts, cow's milk, soy, wheat, fish and shellfish. Other causes are bee and insect bites, some medicines (antibiotics, aspirin) and latex (rubber gloves, swimming hats).

A reaction can develop within minutes of exposure to the allergen. A child suffering a mild to moderate allergic reaction will exhibit one or more of the following:

- An itchy allergic rash or welts
- Tingling in and/or around the mouth
- Abdominal pain
- Vomiting and/or diarrhoea
- Facial and eyelid swelling

A severe allergic reaction or anaphylaxis is a generalised allergic reaction involving the child's breathing and/or circulation systems with the following symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing/noisy breathing and difficulty talking, a hoarse voice
- Swelling of the tongue or swelling/tightness in the throat



Patient Information

- Collapse or loss of consciousness or a pale and floppy baby or toddler

What can I do to prevent another allergic/anaphylaxis reaction?

- If you can identify the cause then avoid contact with the particular allergen
- Inform school/nursery/all carers about the allergy, its symptoms and avoidance
- Food allergies: do not allow food sharing between children. Your child should only eat food provided from home or given with your permission
- Ensure your child always washes their hands after playing and before eating
- Ensure you have Cetirizine or Piriton available in your home **and with you at all times** If an EpiPen has been prescribed then ensure your child carries it **at all times** and that all their carers/teachers are trained in its use and practice regularly
- If your child suffers from anaphylaxis or severe allergic reactions then ensure your child wears a Medic Alert bracelet www.medicalert.org.uk

What should I do if my child has an allergic reaction?

Give Chlorphenamine Maleate (Piriton) immediately, remove the allergen and monitor for any further reactions these are usually brought over the counter from the chemist give as directed on the box.

What should I do if my child has anaphylaxis?

- Immediately administer the EpiPen if your child has been prescribed one
- Call 999 immediately
- Give Piriton or Cetirizine immediately as above and remove the allergen

For further advice and information:

- Call NHS 111 (24 hours a day)
- Contact your GP

Patient Information

Children's Emergency Department

University Hospital
Clifford Bridge Road
Walsgrave
Coventry
CV2 2DX
Telephone 024 7696 6934

Children's Minor Injuries Unit

Hospital of St. Cross
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Rugby
CV22 5PX
Telephone 01788 545140

The Trust has access to interpreting and translation services. If you need this information in another language or format, please contact 024 7696 6934 and we will do our best to meet your needs.

The Trust operates a smoke free policy.

Document History

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