

# Severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis)



**St John**

**IN A MEDICAL EMERGENCY CALL TRIPLE ZERO (000) FOR AN AMBULANCE.**

**DRSABCD** Danger ► Response ► Send for help ► Airway ► Breathing ► CPR ► Defibrillation

The DRSABCD Action Plan is the first step when providing first aid. Use this to assess the immediate situation.

## WARNING

- Anaphylaxis is potentially life-threatening.
- People diagnosed with severe allergies should have an anaphylaxis action plan and an adrenaline auto-injector. They may also wear a medical alert device.
- In a severe allergic reaction, you should use any available adrenaline auto-injector.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

The following signs and symptoms of a **MILD TO MODERATE ALLERGIC REACTION** may precede anaphylaxis:

- swelling of face and tongue
- hives, welts or body redness
- tingling mouth
- abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea

The main symptoms of a **SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTION** are rapidly developing breathing and circulation problems.

Other signs and symptoms may include:

- wheeze or persistent cough
- difficult or noisy breathing
- difficulty talking or a hoarse voice
- swelling or tightness in throat
- faintness, dizziness
- confusion
- loss of consciousness
- pallor and floppiness (in young children)

## WHAT TO DO

- 1 Follow DRSABCD.
- 2 If the patient is carrying an adrenaline auto-injector, use it immediately.
- 3 Ask the patient if they need help with their action plan if they have one. Only help the patient if they request it. If the patient is unable to give verbal consent, administer an adrenaline auto-injector immediately.
- 4 Do not allow the patient to stand or walk. Help the patient to lie down flat, or if breathing is difficult, allow the patient to sit.
- 5 **Call triple zero (000)** for an ambulance.
- 6 Monitor the patient. If there is no improvement after 5 minutes, use another adrenaline auto-injector, if available.
- 7 If breathing stops, follow DRSABCD.

## HOW TO GIVE AN EPIPEN® OR EPIPEN JR®

- 1 Form a fist around the EpiPen® and PULL OFF THE BLUE SAFETY RELEASE.
- 2 Hold the patient's leg still and PLACE THE ORANGE END against the patient's outer mid-thigh (with or without clothing).
- 3 PUSH DOWN HARD until a click is heard or felt, and hold in place for 3 seconds.  
*All EpiPens® should be held in place for 3 seconds regardless of instructions on the device's label.*
- 4 REMOVE the EpiPen®.

FOR MORE INFORMATION SEE [WWW.ALLERGY.ORG.AU](http://WWW.ALLERGY.ORG.AU)

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