



5-2 Safety Short

Allergic Reactions

Allergic reactions can be triggered by foods, medications, insect stings, pollen, or other substances. Although most allergic reactions aren't serious, severe reactions can be life-threatening and can require immediate medical attention.

Signs and Symptoms:

Mild Reaction

- itchiness
- mild skin redness or swelling
- stuffy, runny nose
- sneezing
- itchy, watery eyes
- red bumps (hives) that occur anywhere on the body



Severe Reaction

- swelling of the face or mouth
- difficulty swallowing or speaking
- wheezing or difficulty breathing
- abdominal pain, nausea, or vomiting
- dizziness or fainting

What to Do:



1. Contact a doctor if a child has an allergic reaction that is more than mild or the reaction concerns you.
2. If the child has symptoms of a mild reaction, give an oral antihistamine such as diphenhydramine.
3. If the child has symptoms of a severe allergic reaction and you have injectable epinephrine, immediately use it as directed and call for emergency help.

Seek emergency medical care if the child:

- has any symptoms of a severe allergic reaction
- was exposed to a food or substance that has triggered a severe reaction in the past
- was given injectable epinephrine

Think Prevention!

Avoid substances that are known to trigger an allergic reaction in the child. Keep an oral antihistamine such as diphenhydramine available. If the child has a severe allergy, be sure that doctor-prescribed injectable epinephrine is kept with or near the child at all times, and that you, caretakers, and the child (if old enough) know how to use it.

Note: All information is for educational purposes only. For specific medical advice, diagnoses, and treatment, consult a doctor. Review this with a doctor prior to use.

Reviewed by: John Bernardi, MD, and Deborah Mulligan-Smith, MD Date reviewed: April 2004