Anaphylactic reactions – Initial treatment

Anaphylactic reaction?

Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Disability, Exposure

Diagnosis - look for:
- Acute onset of illness
- Life-threatening Airway and/or Breathing and/or Circulation problems ¹
- And usually skin changes

- Call for help
- Lie patient flat
- Raise patient’s legs (if breathing not impaired)

Intramuscular Adrenaline ²

¹ Life-threatening problems:
Airway: swelling, hoarseness, stridor
Breathing: rapid breathing, wheeze, fatigue, cyanosis, SpO₂ < 92%, confusion
Circulation: pale, clammy, low blood pressure, faintness, drowsy/coma

² Intramuscular Adrenaline
IM doses of 1:1000 adrenaline (repeat after 5 min if no better)
- Adult: 500 micrograms IM (0.5 mL)
- Child more than 12 years: 500 micrograms IM (0.5 mL)
- Child 6 -12 years: 300 micrograms IM (0.3 mL)
- Child less than 6 years: 150 micrograms IM (0.15 mL)

See also:
- Anaphylaxis algorithm
Anaphylaxis - Glossary of medical terms:

1. Anaphylaxis: An emergency condition resulting from an abnormal and immediate allergic response to exposure to a substance (foreign proteins or drugs)

2. Angioedema: Abnormal swelling of deeper layers of skin (usually in eyes, lips, hands and feet)

3. Bradycardia: Abnormally slow heart rate (<50 beats per minute)

4. Conjunctivitis: Inflammation of the conjunctiva (mucous membrane covering the front of the eye and inner parts of eyelids)

5. Cyanosis: Bluish or purplish discoloration of skin due to lack of oxygen supply

6. Erythema: Flushing/ Abnormal redness of skin due to dilated capillaries

7. Hypotension: Abnormally low blood pressure

8. Hypoxia: Deficiency of oxygen in tissues

9. Pallor: Abnormal paleness of skin

10. Palpitations: Awareness of the heart beat

11. Parenteral: Administered by any way other than the mouth (drugs/ nutrition)

12. Pruritis: Localised or generalised itching due to irritation of sensory nerves

13. Rhinitis: Inflamed mucous membrane of nose causing - nasal congestion, itching and sneezing

14. Stridor: Harsh vibrating sound heard during breathing in case of obstruction of airway

15. Tachycardia: Abnormally fast heartbeat

16. Tachypnoea: Rapid breathing

17. Urticaria: Raised swollen red patches of skin or mucous membrane (Hives)

Reference: Oxford Concise Medical Dictionary, Oxford University Press