

# SEVERE ALLERGIC REACTION (ANAPHYLAXIS)



## Managing a severe allergic reaction

### Signs & symptoms

Watch for any one of the following for anaphylaxis—

- difficulty and/or noisy breathing
- swelling of the tongue
- swelling/tightness of the throat
- difficulty talking and/or hoarse voice
- wheezing and/or coughing
- persistent dizziness or collapse
- in young children — pale and floppy

**Mild to moderate reaction**  
(may precede anaphylaxis):

- swelling of the lips, face, eyes
- hives or welts
- tingling mouth
- abdominal pain and vomiting

### WARNING

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction and potentially life-threatening—always treat as a medical emergency.

### Management

#### ▼ Conscious patient

##### 1. Follow DRSABCD.

- Help patient to sit or lie in a position that assists breathing.

##### 2. If the patient is carrying an auto-injector (e.g. Epipen®, AnaPen®), it should be used at once.

- Let the patient administer the auto-injector themselves, or ask if they require assistance to do so.

##### 3. Keep patient in lying or sitting position

- observe and record pulse and breathing.

##### 4. If no response after 5 minutes, further adrenaline may be given.

#### ▼ Unconscious patient

##### 1. Immediately administer the adrenaline autoinjector, if available.

##### 2. Follow DRSABCD.

See [www.allergy.org.au](http://www.allergy.org.au) for further information.

In an emergency, call triple zero (000) for an ambulance

**For more information on St John first aid training and kits, visit [www.stjohn.org.au](http://www.stjohn.org.au) or freecall 1300 360 455**