

Anaphylaxis

Refer all patients with suspected anaphylaxis to the allergy clinic. Anaphylaxis is a severe, life-threatening, generalised or systemic hypersensitivity reaction. It is characterised by rapidly developing, life-threatening problems involving: the airway (pharyngeal or laryngeal oedema) and/or breathing (bronchospasm with tachypnoea) and/or circulation (hypotension and/or tachycardia). In most cases, there are associated skin and mucosal changes.

What tests can I request?

1. Specific IgE to identified or suspected allergen/s
2. Mast cell tryptase

After an episode of anaphylaxis, an adrenaline auto-injector should be prescribed in the Emergency Department or primary care and an allergy referral immediately triggered (NICE guidance).

Patients at risk of anaphylaxis that should be considered for long-term provision of an adrenaline auto-injector (Epipen, Jext, Emerade) include those:

- who have suffered a severe systemic reaction where the allergen cannot be easily avoided
- who are allergic to high-risk allergens, for example nuts with other risk factors (such as asthma), even if the reaction was relatively mild
- who had a reaction in response to trace amounts of allergen/trigger
- who cannot easily avoid the allergen
- with continuing risk of anaphylaxis (e.g. food-dependent exercise-induced)
- with idiopathic anaphylaxis
- with significant co-factors (e.g. asthma in food allergy, raised baseline serum tryptase)

All patients should be prescribed two adrenaline auto-injectors and must have appropriate training in use of the correct self-injectable adrenaline that has been prescribed. Guidance is available at

Epipen: <http://www.epipen.co.uk/patients/demonstrationvideo/>

Jext: <http://www.jext.co.uk/jext-video-demonstrations.aspx>

Emerade: <http://www.emerade-bausch.co.uk/hcp/easy-to-use>

For more information see:

- NICE Guidance on anaphylaxis: <https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/cg134>
- P. Ewan et al. BSACI guideline: prescribing an adrenaline auto-injector. Clin Exp Allergy 2016 (46) 1258–1280.