

What is Anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic response that occurs when a person is exposed to an allergy causing substance (allergen) to which he or she has previously been sensitized. Figure 1 (a) shows Roan a short time after eating yogurt. Hives immediately start appearing along with swelling around the eyes, nose, and mouth. Figure 1 (b) is shortly after, the swelling is now across his whole face.

- the allergen enters the blood stream causing the release of chemicals throughout the body that try to protect it from the foreign substance
- the immune system goes overboard in anaphylaxis
- initial signs and symptoms may appear within a few seconds, or up to two hours after exposure.



(a)



(b)

Figure 1: (a) Roan directly after and (b) minutes after eating yogurt

Signs and Symptoms of Allergic Reaction/Anaphylaxis

- itching of skin and a raised rash (hives)
- flushing, swelling of the tissues of the lips, throat, tongue, hands, and/or feet
- wheezing, shortness of breath, coughing, hoarseness
- headache, nausea, vomiting, abdominal cramps, loss of consciousness

Treatment of Allergic Reaction/Anaphylaxis

1. give benadryl at the first signs of allergic reaction and notify family
2. if symptoms worsen called 911 and use the EpiPen (see Figure 2)
3. inform 911 operator of possible anaphylaxis and use of EpiPen

When to use the EpiPen

During an allergic reaction if a person experiences:

- difficulty breathing
- swelling in throat causing difficulty swallowing
- wheezing
- raspy cough
- fainting, collapse, or loss of conscious
- when in doubt use the EpiPen

How to use the EpiPen

- Pull off the grey safety cap.
- Place the tip of the device (black end) at the middle part of the outer thigh. Do not use buttock or close to the knee.
- Activate the EpiPen by pushing firmly. There will be a click when the hidden needle ejects forward into the thigh muscle.
- Example videos found at YouTube
(ex. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2OPbzTflo5Q>)



Figure 2: EpiPen