



Background

Anaphylaxis – sometimes called “allergic shock”, is a severe allergic reaction, which can lead to rapid death if untreated. Common allergens causing anaphylaxis in student(s) can be: nuts, milk, eggs, shellfish, wheat, insect stings, medications and latex. Anaphylaxis is a life-threatening condition regardless of the substance that triggers it.

Symptoms

An anaphylactic reaction can involve any of the following symptoms, which may appear alone or in any combination, regardless of the triggering allergen:

- Skin: hives, swelling, itching, warmth, redness, rash.
- Respiratory (breathing): wheezing, shortness of breath, throat tightness, cough, hoarse voice, chest pain/tightness, nasal congestion or hay fever-like symptoms (runny itchy nose and watery eyes, sneezing), trouble swallowing.
- Gastrointestinal (stomach): nausea, pain/cramps, vomiting, and diarrhoea.
- Cardiovascular (heart): pale/blue colour, weak pulse, passing out, dizzy/lightheaded, and shock.
- Other: anxiety, feeling of “impending doom”, headache, and uterine cramps in females.

The most dangerous symptoms of an allergic reaction involve:

- Breathing difficulties caused by swelling of the airways; and
- A drop in blood pressure indicated by dizziness, light-headedness or feeling faint/weak.

While the school cannot guarantee an allergen-free environment, it will strive to provide a safe environment for student(s) with life-threatening allergies.

Procedures

1. The Principal is responsible to provide mandatory training for staff that addresses avoidance strategies (prevention) and emergency response in the event of an anaphylactic incident.
2. Educational information pertaining to anaphylaxis prevention and treatment will be shared with parents through a school newsletter in September.

3. Posters regarding anaphylaxis will be posted in common areas, lunch areas in particular, to educate students, staff and parents.
4. The registration form asks parents/guardians to notify the school at the time of registration if their child is at risk for anaphylaxis reaction and to provide medical information in accordance with Administrative Procedure 316 – Administration of Medication to Students.
5. Parents/guardians are responsible for providing an adequate supply of up-to-date auto-injections and/or other prescribed medications. Parents are advised to periodically check the supply and the expiry dates of medication provided to the school. The school does not assume responsibility for the supply of medication or the replenishment due to expiry date.
6. The school will have on hand one epi-pen at each campus in case of emergency if there is no access to the epi-pen of a student in medical distress.
 - 6.1 One epi-pen shall be acquired for each campus by the Board authorized designate, and stored securely. The Principal will monitor to ensure a non-expired epi-pen is always accessible at each campus.
7. In the event of an allergic reaction, school personnel will first follow the Anaphylaxis Emergency Procedure:
 - 7.1 School personnel will call 911.
 - 7.2 If the student appears to be losing consciousness or awareness, or shows difficulty in breathing, the Epi-pen will be administered.
 - 7.3 School personnel will notify the parent/guardian.

Reference:

Education Act, s. 18, 33, 52, 196, 197, 213, 214, 215, 218, 222
Student Protection Act
Emergency Medical Aid Act
Occupational Health and Safety Act
ATA Provision of Medical Services to Medically Fragile Students
Anaphylaxis: A Handbook for School Boards, Canadian School Boards Association
Alberta Health Services Healthy Schools Manual