Anaphylaxis: When to Seek Emergency Care

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The updated guidelines on anaphylaxis management provide guidance on who should visit the emergency department (ED)[1]

From the 2023 Anaphylaxis Practice Parameter Update[1]

Patients may NOT need to visit the ED if:

- Epinephrine is given promptly at the first sign of anaphylaxis **AND**
- Symptoms of anaphylaxis resolve completely or nearly completely within minutes

OBSERVE AT HOME

- Symptoms ***resolve*** within 5 minutes of epinephrine administration
- Do this **ONLY IF *additional epinephrine and medical care*** are readily available

CONSIDER SEEKING EMERGENCY CARE

- Symptoms ***begin to improve*** within 5 minutes after the first dose of epinephrine
- May administer a ***second dose*** of epinephrine

SEEK EMERGENCY CARE IMMEDIATELY

- Symptoms ***do not improve, worsen, or recur*** within 5 minutes of the first dose of epinephrine
- Administer a second dose and ***GO TO THE ED***

There is no evidence of the benefits of going to the ED after the first dose of epinephrine for **every case of anaphylaxis**[1]

After using epinephrine, if symptoms persist, worsen, or return, patients should call 911

Considerations for Shared Decision-Making Conversations With Patients and Caregivers[1]

The consideration to seek emergency care should be based on ongoing symptoms of anaphylaxis, *not* because epinephrine was given

- ✔ Does the patient have comorbidities that could affect the initial treatment of anaphylaxis?
- ✔ Can they recognize symptoms of anaphylaxis?
- ✔ Do they have epinephrine readily available?
- ✔ Do they know when and how to use epinephrine?
- ✔ Have they used epinephrine before?
- ✔ Do they have any fears around using epinephrine?
- ✔ Is someone else immediately available to assist if symptoms worsen or the patient needs additional help?

Remind Patients and Caregivers How to Prepare for an Anaphylactic Reaction[1]

Anaphylaxis Recognition

Know the signs and symptoms

Epinephrine Use

- Have 2 *unexpired* epinephrine devices
- Know how to use them
- Give epinephrine at the first sign of anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis Action Plan

Follow your action plan for home management and/or ED care

Please refer to the updated Practice Parameters for complete information on the guideline change[1]

Reference

1. Golden DBK, et al. *Ann Allergy Asthma Immunol*. 2024;132(2):124-176.

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