



Appendix 6: Anaphylaxis response protocol

Note: Refer to the current *Australian Immunisation Handbook*.

ANAPHYLAXIS RESPONSE PROTOCOL		
SIGNS OF ANAPHYLAXIS		
<p>Anaphylaxis causes respiratory and/or cardiovascular signs or symptoms <i>AND</i> involves other organ systems, such as the skin or gastrointestinal tract. Signs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• signs of airway obstruction, such as cough, wheeze, hoarseness, stridor or signs of respiratory distress• upper airway swelling (lip, tongue, throat, uvula or larynx)• tachycardia, weak/absent carotid pulse• hypotension that is sustained and with no improvement without specific treatment (Note: in infants and young children, limpness and pallor are signs of hypotension)• loss of consciousness with no improvement once supine or in head-down position• skin signs, such as pruritus (itchiness), generalised erythema (redness), urticaria (weals) or angioedema (localised or general swelling of the deeper layers of the skin or subcutaneous tissue)• abdominal cramps, diarrhoea, nausea and/or vomiting• sense of severe anxiety and distress.		
DIFFERENTIATING BETWEEN ANAPHYLAXIS AND A VASOVAGAL EPISODE (adapted from the <i>Australian Immunisation Handbook</i>)		
	ANAPHYLAXIS	VASOVAGAL EPISODE
ONSET	Usually within 15 minutes but can occur within hours of vaccine administration	Immediate usually within minutes of, or during, vaccine administration
RESPIRATORY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cough, wheeze, hoarseness, stridor, or signs of respiratory distress (e.g. tachypnoea, cyanosis, rib recession)• Upper airway swelling (lip, tongue, throat, uvula or larynx)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Normal respiration; may be shallow, but not laboured
CARDIOVASCULAR	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tachycardia, weak/absent carotid pulse• Hypotension—sustained and no improvement without specific treatment (Note: in infants and young children, limpness and pallor are signs of hypotension)• Loss of consciousness—no improvement once supine or in head-down position	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bradycardia, weak/absent peripheral pulse, strong carotid pulse• Hypotension—usually transient and corrects in supine position• Loss of consciousness—improves once supine or in head-down position
SKIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pruritus, generalised skin erythema, urticaria (weals) or angioedema (localised or general swelling of the deeper layers of the skin or subcutaneous tissues)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generalised pallor, cool clammy skin
GASTRO-INTESTINAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abdominal cramps, diarrhoea, nausea and/or vomiting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nausea/vomiting
NEUROLOGICAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sense of severe anxiety and distress	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feels faint, light-headed