



NHS 24 030 – Allergies and Anaphylaxis Management Policy

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Introduction

This policy should be read in conjunction with the NHS 24's First Aid Arrangements policy HS 005.

The NHS 24 is committed to a holistic approach to the health care and management of those members of the staff suffering from specific allergies.

NHS 24's position is not to guarantee a completely allergen free environment, rather to minimise the risk of exposure, encourage self responsibility, and plan for an effective response to possible emergencies.

The success of minimising anaphylaxis risk – and all other allergic reactions - requires the cooperation of all staff.

NHS 24 does not claim to be an 'allergen free' organisation. The Anaphylaxis Campaign advises that this is a pragmatic approach, for the following reasons;

It would be impossible to provide an absolute guarantee that all NHS 24 premises would be allergen free. Employees regularly bring in food from home and purchase food en-route to work which is extremely difficult to control.

There is a strong case to be argued that staff with food allergies will develop a better awareness and understanding of how to manage their allergies if they grow up in an environment where allergens may be present but, as NHS 24 is restricted to what employees bring into the workplace for their meals the Organisation can only take precautions such as placing appropriate signage in work and food preparation areas and improve the knowledge and awareness of the issues as far as is reasonably practicable.

Whilst many allergic reactions are the result of food ingestion, we recognise, too, that severe allergic reactions can occur as a result of individuals being susceptible to airborne allergens. Allergic reactions can also be triggered by touching surfaces – such as computer keyboards which may have been inadvertently contaminated.

Policy

NHS 24 recognises that some employees may suffer from potentially life threatening allergies to certain foods or toxins from insects.

The Organisation seeks to support staff towards maintaining a minimised risk environment, whilst also concentrating on ensuring an effective medical response to potential anaphylactic episodes.

The intent of this policy is to minimise the risk to any employee suffering allergy-induced anaphylaxis whilst at work or attending any work related activity, and to ensure staff are properly prepared to manage such emergency situations should they arise.

The establishment of clear procedures and responsibilities within departments to be followed by staff where it is known that an employee is susceptible to a potentially life threatening allergy to certain foods is required.

Ensuring First Aid Staff training includes anaphylaxis management, including awareness of triggers and first aid procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency.

NB: First Aider is someone who is qualified to give first aid treatment in the event of an

injury or illness – they must be qualified and hold a current certificate in First At Work or Emergency First Aid at Work.

NHS 24 is committed to proactive risk allergy management through:

- The encouragement of self-responsibility and learned avoidance strategies amongst staff suffering from allergies.
- Provision of a staff awareness programme on anaphylaxis.
- The establishment and documentation of a comprehensive management plan where needed.
- The establishment of specific risk exposure minimization practices and strategies wherever required
- Close liaison with staff who suffer allergies through our Risk Assessment process ensuring appropriate control measures are implemented. Copies of the documents must be issued to GM's and CSM's for that centre.

This management approach is congruent with contemporary specialist medical advice, and NHS 24 believes that staff self managing their condition is a skill attuned to their 'real world' situation.

Common allergies

Substances that cause allergic reactions are called allergens. The more common allergies include:

- **grass and tree pollen** – an allergy to these is known as hay fever (allergic rhinitis)
- **dust mites**
- **animal dander** (tiny flakes of skin or hair)
- **food** – particularly nuts, fruit, shellfish, eggs and cow's milk
- **insect bites and stings**
- **medication** – including ibuprofen, aspirin, and certain antibiotics
- **latex** – used to make some gloves and condoms
- **mould** – these can release small particles into the air that you can breathe in
- **household chemicals** – including those in detergents and hair dyes

DEFINITIONS

- **Allergy** - A condition in which the body has an exaggerated response to a substance (e.g. food or drug). Also known as hypersensitivity.
- **Allergen**- A normally harmless substance that triggers an allergic reaction in the immune system of a susceptible person.
- **Anaphylaxis**- Anaphylaxis, or anaphylactic shock, is a sudden, severe and potentially life-threatening allergic reaction to food, stings, bites, or medicines.
- **EpiPen**- Brand name for syringe style device containing the drug adrenaline which is ready for immediate intramuscular administration.
- **Minimised Risk Environment**- An environment where risk management practices have minimised the risk of (allergen) exposure to a reasonable level. Not an allergen free environment.
- **Individual Risk Assessment**- A detailed document outlining an individual's condition, hazards, risk control measures and safe system of work in order to minimize the risk.
- **Management System**- A record system managed by the person in charge which describes the individual employees medical care plans and the particular members of staff who will need to be trained and informed of these plans.

Anaphylaxis protocol

How do I recognise an anaphylaxis reaction and what action should I take?

Contact a First Aider, Dial 999 and contact lead clinician in contact centre.

First Aid staff should have been briefed on the condition and familiarise themselves with the NHS webpage information:

<http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-allergy/Pages/Intro1.aspx>

Early symptoms include

- Itchy red rash anywhere on the body
- Runny nose and watery eyes
- Nausea and vomiting
- Dizziness

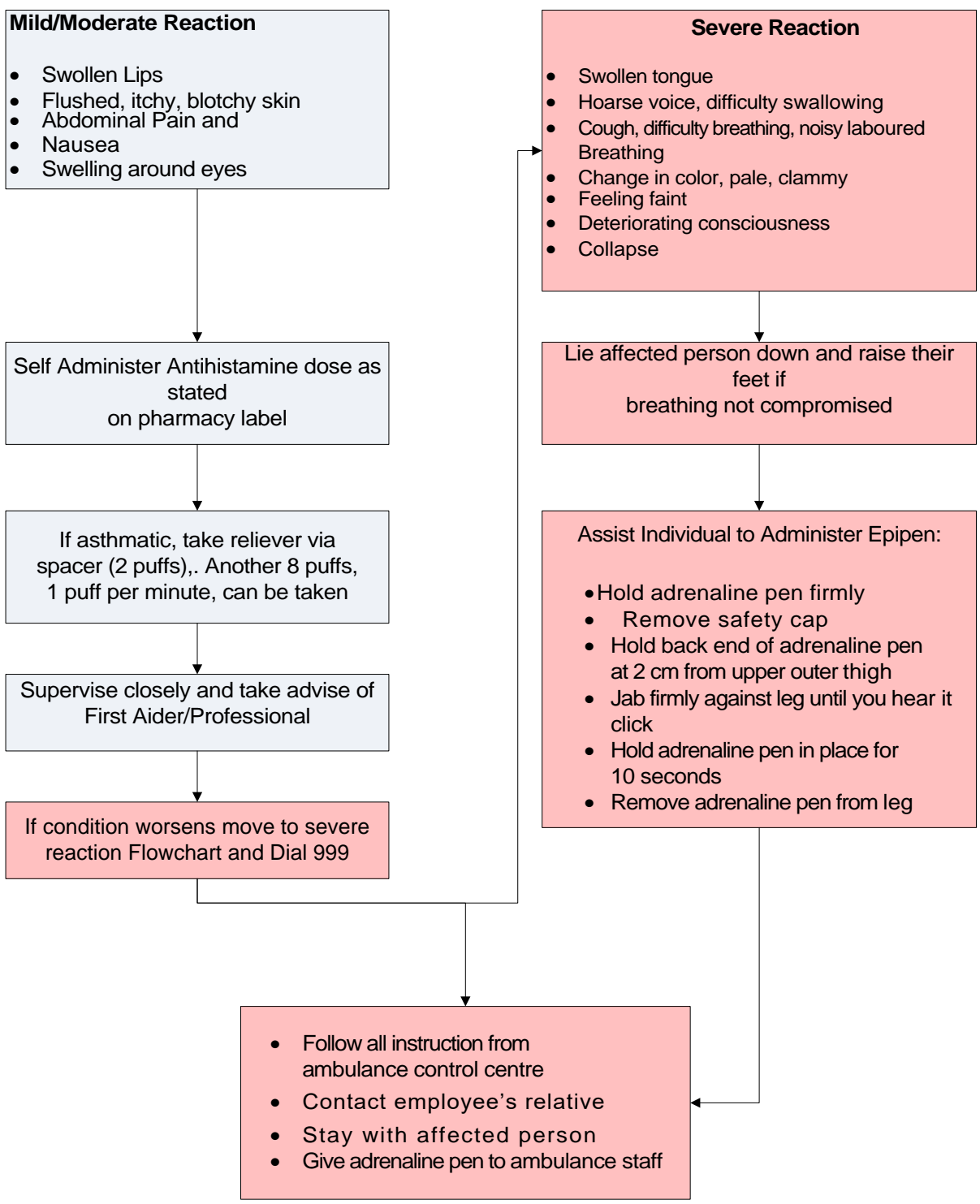
Danger signs include

- Swelling of the lips, tongue and throat
- Cough, wheeze, tightness of chest or shortness of breath Sudden collapse or unconsciousness

Any treatment received will be dependent on the severity of the reaction – Always follow the advice given by a professional.

NHS 24 Flow chart advice for First Aiders for dealing with Anaphylaxis

TREATMENT FLOW CHART
For First Aid Advice



Review History

Issue No	Reason for review and brief description of changes made	Effective Date
1	Initial Issue	November 2016
1.1	Reviewed - no significant changes	September 2019