ADVANCED acute management of anaphylaxis guidelines

These guidelines are intended for emergency department staff, ambulance staff, rural and remote GPs and nurses providing emergency care.

Immediate action

1. Remove allergen (if still present).
2. Call for assistance.
3. Lay patient flat. Do not allow them to stand or walk. If breathing is difficult, allow them to sit.
4. Give INTRAMUSCULAR INJECTION (IMI) OF ADRENALINE without delay using an adrenaline autoinjector if available OR adrenaline ampoules and syringe.
   - 1:1000 IMI into outer mid-thigh
   - 0.01mg per kg up to 0.5mg per dose
   - Repeat every 5 minutes as needed.
   - If multiple doses required or a severe reaction consider adrenaline infusion if skills and equipment available.

5. Give oxygen (if available).

6. Call ambulance to transport patient if not already in a hospital setting.

Administer intravenous saline (20mL/kg) if hypotensive.

If required at any time, initiate cardiopulmonary resuscitation.

Supportive management (when skills and equipment available)

- Monitor pulse, blood pressure, respiratory rate, pulse oximetry, conscious state.
- Give high flow oxygen (6-8 L/min) and airway support if needed.
- Supplemental oxygen should be given to all patients with respiratory distress, reduced conscious level and those requiring repeated doses of adrenaline.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age (years)</th>
<th>Weight (kg)</th>
<th>Vol. Adrenaline 1:1000</th>
<th>Adrenaline autoinjectors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt;1</td>
<td>5-10</td>
<td>0.05 – 0.1 mL</td>
<td>10-20 kg (~1-5 yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0.1 mL</td>
<td>0.15 mg (green labelled device)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0.15 mL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0.2 mL</td>
<td>&gt;20 kg (~ &gt; 5yrs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7-10</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.3 mL</td>
<td>0.3 mg (yellow labelled device)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0.4 mL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&gt;12 and adults</td>
<td>&gt;50</td>
<td>0.5 mL</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Supplemental oxygen should be considered in patients who have asthma, other chronic respiratory disease, or cardiovascular disease.

Obtain intravenous access in adults and in hypotensive children.

If hypotensive:
- Give intravenous normal saline (20 mL/kg rapidly under pressure), and repeat bolus if hypotension persists.
- Consider additional wide bore (14 or 16 gauge for adults) intravenous access.

DURING SEVERE ANAPHYLAXIS WITH HYPOTENSION, MARKED FLUID EXTRAVASATION INTO THE TISSUES CAN OCCUR: DO NOT FORGET FLUID RESUSCITATION.

Assess circulation to reduce risk of overtreatment
- Monitor for signs of overtreatment (especially if respiratory distress or hypotension were absent initially) – including pulmonary oedema, hypertension.
- In this setting (anaphylaxis) it is recommended that if possible a simple palpable systolic blood pressure (SBP) should be measured:
  - Attach a manual BP cuff of an appropriate size and find the brachial or radial pulse.
  - Determine the pressure at which this pulse disappears/reappears (the “palpable” systolic BP).
  - This is a reliable measure of initial severity and response to treatment
  - Measurement of palpable SBP may be more difficult in children.

If a patient is nauseous, shaky, vomiting, or tachycardic but has a normal or elevated SBP, this may be adrenaline toxicity rather than worsening anaphylaxis.

Additional measures - IV adrenaline infusion

IV adrenaline infusions should only be given by, or in liaison with, an emergency medicine/critical care specialist.

If your centre has a protocol for IV adrenaline infusion for critical care, this should be utilised and titrated to response with close cardio-respiratory monitoring.

If there is not an established protocol for your centre, two protocols for IV adrenaline infusion are provided, one for pre-hospital settings and a second for emergency departments/tertiary hospital settings only.

It is important to note that the two infusion protocols have different concentrations and different rates of infusion.

It is vital that IV adrenaline infusions should be used with the following equipment wherever possible:

- Dedicated line,
- Infusion pump,
- Anti-reflux valves in intravenous line.

Additional measures - IV adrenaline infusion for pre-hospital settings

If there is inadequate response to IMI adrenaline or deterioration, start an intravenous adrenaline infusion. IV adrenaline infusions should only be given by, or in liaison with, an emergency medicine/critical care specialist.

The protocol for 1000 mL normal saline is as follows:

- Mix 1 mL of 1:1000 adrenaline in 1000 mL of normal saline.
- Start infusion at ~5 mL/kg/hour (~0.1 microgram/kg/minute) using a pump.
  - If you do not have an infusion pump, a standard giving set administers ~20 drops per ml; Therefore, start at ~2 drops per second for an adult.
• Titrate rate up or down according to response and side effects.

• Monitor continuously – ECG and pulse oximetry and frequent non-invasive blood pressure measurements as a minimum to maximise benefit and minimise risk of overtreatment and adrenaline toxicity.

Caution - Intravenous boluses of adrenaline are NOT recommended due to risk of cardiac ischaemia or arrhythmia UNLESS the patient is in cardiac arrest.

Additional measures - IV adrenaline infusion for emergency departments and tertiary hospital settings only

This infusion will facilitate a more rapid delivery through a peripheral line and should only be used in emergency departments and tertiary hospital settings.

The protocol for 100 mL normal saline is as follows:

• Mix 1 mL of 1:1000 adrenaline in 100 mL normal saline.
  – Initial rate adjusted accordingly to 0.5 mL/kg/hour.
  – Should only be given by infusion pump.

• Monitor continuously – ECG and pulse oximetry and frequent non-invasive blood pressure measurements as a minimum to maximise benefit and minimise risk of overtreatment and adrenaline toxicity.

Additional measures to consider if IV adrenaline infusion is ineffective

| For Upper airway obstruction | • Nebulised adrenaline (5mL i.e. 5 ampoules of 1:1000).
|                            | • Consider need for advanced airway management if skills and equipment are available (see additional information below). |
| For persistent hypotension/shock | • Give normal saline (maximum of 50mL/kg in first 30 minutes).
|                            | • In patients with cardiogenic shock (especially if taking beta blockers) consider an intravenous glucagon bolus of:
|                            |   • 1-2mg in adults
|                            |   • 20-30 microgram/kg up to 1mg in children
|                            |   This may be repeated or followed by an infusion of 1-2mg/hour in adults.
|                            | • In adults, selective vasoconstrictors metaraminol (2-10mg) or vasopressin (10-40 units) only after advice from an emergency medicine/critical care specialist. Beware of side effects including arrhythmias, severe hypotension and pulmonary oedema.
|                            | • In children, metaraminol 10 micrograms/kg/dose can be used. Noradrenaline infusion may be used in the critical care setting only with invasive blood pressure monitoring. |

| For persistent wheeze | Bronchodilators:
|                       | • Salbutamol 8-12 puffs of 100microgram using a spacer OR 5mg salbutamol by nebuliser.
|                       | • Note: Bronchodilators do not prevent or relieve upper airway obstruction, hypotension or shock. |

| Corticosteroids: | • Oral prednisolone 1 mg/kg (maximum of 50 mg) or intravenous hydrocortisone 5mg/kg (maximum of 200 mg). |
|               | • Note: Steroids must not be used as a first line medication in place of adrenaline. |
Advanced airway management

- Oxygenation is more important than intubation *per se*
- Always call for help from the most experienced person available
- If airway support is required, first use the skills you are most familiar with (e.g., jaw thrust, Guedel or nasopharyngeal airway, bag-valve-mask with high flow oxygen attached). This will save most patients, even those with apparent airway swelling (these patients have often stopped breathing due to circulatory collapse rather than airway obstruction and can be adequately ventilated with basic life support procedures)
- DO NOT make prolonged attempts at intubation - remember the patient is not getting any oxygen while you are intubating.

If unable to maintain an airway and the patient's oxygen saturations are falling further approaches to the airway (e.g., cricothyrotomy) should be considered in accordance with established difficult airway management protocols. Specific training is required to perform these procedures.

Special situation: Overwhelming anaphylaxis (cardiac arrest)

Key points:
- Massive vasodilatation and fluid extravasation.
- Unlikely that IMI adrenaline will be absorbed in this situation due to poor peripheral circulation.
- Even if absorbed, IMI adrenaline on its own may be insufficient to overcome vasodilatation and extravasation.
- Need both IV adrenaline bolus (cardiac arrest protocol, 1 mg every 2-3 minutes) AND aggressive fluid resuscitation in addition to CPR (Normal Saline 20mL/kg stat, through a large bore IV under pressure, repeat if no response).
- Do not give up too soon - this is a situation when prolonged CPR should be considered, because the patient arrested rapidly with previously normal tissue oxygenation, and has a potentially reversible cause.

Antihistamines and corticosteroids

Antihistamines:
- Antihistamines have no role in treating or preventing respiratory or cardiovascular symptoms of anaphylaxis.
- Do not use oral sedating antihistamines as side effects (drowsiness or lethargy) may mimic some signs of anaphylaxis.
- *Injectable promethazine should not be used* in anaphylaxis as it can worsen hypotension and cause muscle necrosis.

Corticosteroids:
- The benefit of corticosteroids in anaphylaxis is unproven.
- It is common practice to prescribe a 2-day course of oral steroids (e.g., oral prednisolone 1 mg/kg, maximum 50 mg daily) to hopefully reduce the risk of symptom recurrence after a severe reaction or a reaction with marked or persistent wheeze.

Observe patient for at least 4 hours after last dose of adrenaline

Relapse, protracted and/or biphasic reactions may occur.
- Patients will require overnight observation if they:
  - Had a severe or protracted anaphylaxis (e.g., required repeated doses of adrenaline or IV fluid resuscitation), OR
  - Have a history of asthma or severe/protracted anaphylaxis, OR
  - Have other concomitant illness (e.g., asthma, history or arrhythmia), OR
  - Live alone or are remote from medical care, OR
  - Present for medical care late in the evening.
The true incidence of biphasic reactions is estimated to occur following 3-20% of anaphylactic reactions.

**Follow up treatment**

**Adrenaline autoinjector**
- If there is a risk of re-exposure (e.g. stings, foods, unknown cause) then prescribe an adrenaline autoinjector before discharge, pending specialist review.
- Train the patient in autoinjector use and give them an ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis (see ASCIA website [www.allergy.org.au](http://www.allergy.org.au)).

**Allergy specialist referral**
- Refer ALL patients who present with anaphylaxis for specialist review
- The allergy specialist will:
  - Identify/confirm cause.
  - Educate regarding avoidance/prevention strategies, management of comorbidities.
  - Provide ASCIA Action Plan for Anaphylaxis - preparation for future reactions.
  - Initiate immunotherapy where available (some insect venoms).

**Documentation of episodes**
Patients should be advised to document the circumstances of episodes of anaphylaxis to facilitate identification of avoidable causes (e.g. food, medication, herbal remedies, bites and stings, co-factors like exercise) in the 6-8 hours preceding the onset of symptoms. The ASCIA anaphylaxis event record can be used to collect this information ([www.allergy.org.au/health-professionals/anaphylaxis-resources/anaphylaxis-event-record](http://www.allergy.org.au/health-professionals/anaphylaxis-resources/anaphylaxis-event-record)).

**Preparation: Equipment required for acute management of anaphylaxis**

The equipment on your emergency trolley should include:
- Adrenaline 1:1000 (consider adrenaline autoinjector availability in rural locations for initial administration by nursing staff)
- 1ml syringes; 21 gauge needles
- Oxygen
- Airway equipment, including nebuliser and suction
- Defibrillator
- Manual blood pressure cuff
- IV access equipment (including large bore cannulae)
- Pressure sleeve (aids rapid infusion of fluid under pressure)
- At least 3 litres of normal saline

A wall chart has been developed for use by health professionals and published in Australian Prescriber ([www.australianprescriber.com](http://www.australianprescriber.com)) (August 2011).