

Treating an Allergic Reaction

Introduction

The medication prescribed for you by your prescriber is safe for use in the home; however, any medication can cause an allergic reaction. Although allergic reactions are uncommon, we want you to know how to treat them in case of emergency.

An *allergic* reaction is usually mild, and includes itching or swelling at the injection site, or general itching, rash, or hives. An anaphylaxis reaction is more severe, and includes shortness of breath, and possibly a loss of consciousness or cardiac arrest. Anaphylactic reactions are rare.

Supplies

Your pharmacy will provide you with the medications and supplies you need to treat allergic and anaphylactic reactions if ordered by your prescriber. Questions about the supplies should be directed to your pharmacist or nurse.

Please note that the procedure below is a basic “reminder” guideline. The step-by-step procedure must be reviewed with your home care nurse or pharmacist or nurse.

Procedure

If you see an allergic reaction, draw up the vial of diphenhydramine (i.e. Benadryl) into the syringe as instructed by your nurse. Slowly inject the diphenhydramine either into the intravenous (IV) catheter, or into a muscle.

If you see an anaphylaxis reaction, call 911 or emergency services. Draw up both the diphenhydramine (as described above), and the epinephrine vial. Inject the epinephrine slowly into the subcutaneous arm tissue or into a muscle as taught by your nurse. Inject the diphenhydramine slowly into the intravenous (IV) catheter or into a muscle.

Special Notes from Your Pharmacist or Nurse

Allergy

For this patient, the dose of diphenhydramine for allergic reaction is _____ milligrams (mg), or _____ milliliters (cc/mL). The diphenhydramine should be administered

[] Intra-muscularly (IM) [] Intravenously (IV).

Anaphylaxis

For this patient, the dose of diphenhydramine for anaphylaxis reaction is _____ milligrams (mg), or _____ milliliters (cc/mL). The diphenhydramine should be administered

☐ Intramuscularly (IM) ☐ Intravenously (IV).

For this patient, the dose of epinephrine for anaphylaxis reaction is _____, and is administered ☐ Intramuscularly (IM) ☐ Subcutaneously (SQ). The dose may be repeated _____ times spaced by 20 minutes, as needed.