Allergic Reactions

Allergic reactions can range from minor irritation to potentially life-threatening emergencies. This course prepares emergency telecommunicators to gather critical information from callers, recognize the signs and severity of allergic reactions, identify common allergens, and provide appropriate Pre-Arrival Instructions. Learners also examine anaphylaxis, the use and components of an EpiPen, proper EpiPen administration, and treatment considerations for local, mild, and moderate allergic reactions.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, learners will be able to:

1. Gather essential information from callers to assess the seriousness of an allergic reaction.
2. Identify different types of allergic reactions and recognize signs indicating increasing severity.
3. Recognize common allergens and possible sources of allergic reactions.
4. Explain the purpose of epinephrine and identify the basic components of an EpiPen.
5. Assist callers by providing appropriate instructions for EpiPen administration and treatment of non-life-threatening allergic reactions.

Module 1: Understanding Allergic Reactions

This module introduces the information emergency telecommunicators should gather when a caller reports a possible allergic reaction. Learners examine signs and symptoms ranging from localized and mild reactions to moderate reactions and life-threatening anaphylaxis. The module also explores common allergens, medical alert tags, and indicators that help determine the likely cause and severity of a reaction.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Gather information about a patient's breathing, swallowing, alertness, symptoms, allergy history, and symptom onset.
2. Differentiate among local, mild, moderate, and severe allergic reactions based on reported signs and symptoms.
3. Recognize respiratory and cardiovascular indicators associated with anaphylaxis.
4. Identify common food, environmental, medication, latex, bite, and sting allergens.
5. Explain how medical alert tags can provide useful information about a patient's known allergies and medical conditions.

Content/Activities

- Information Gathering
- Assessing breathing and swallowing difficulty
- Assessing alertness and ability to communicate
- Recognizing signs of shock, including faintness, dizziness, sweating, and pale skin
- Identifying additional symptoms such as abdominal pain, itching, hives, nausea, vomiting, nasal congestion, and watery eyes
- Determining allergy history and symptom onset
- Identifying possible causes of an allergic reaction
- Medical Alert Tags
- Be Mindful of Allergic Reactions activity
- Types of Allergic Reactions
- Local reactions
- Mild allergic reactions
- Moderate allergic reactions
- Severe reactions and anaphylactic shock
- Respiratory signs of anaphylaxis

- Cardiovascular signs of anaphylaxis
- Skin irritation
- Mouth irritation
- Internal irritation
- Common Allergens
- Food allergens
- Bites and stings
- Environmental factors
- Medications and latex
- Star of Life and medical alert identification
- Test Your Knowledge

Module 2: EpiPen and Other Treatments

This module focuses on emergency treatment for severe allergic reactions. Learners examine how epinephrine works, how EpiPen and EpiPen Junior devices are used, and how to identify the major components of an EpiPen. The module also prepares learners to guide callers through EpiPen administration and recognize important considerations when an individual is experiencing anaphylaxis.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Explain the purpose of epinephrine as a first-line treatment for anaphylaxis.
2. Describe how epinephrine affects blood vessels, heart rate, airway muscles, and the progression of an allergic reaction.
3. Differentiate between EpiPen and EpiPen Junior and recognize the importance of considering patient age and weight.
4. Identify the major parts and safety features of an EpiPen auto-injector.
5. Explain the steps involved in assisting a caller with proper EpiPen administration.

Content/Activities

- EpiPen Injector
- What is an EpiPen?
- How Epinephrine Works
- EpiPen and EpiPen Junior
- Adult and Child Doses
- Parts of an EpiPen
- Orange Needle End
- Injection instructions on the device
- Medication Viewing Window
- EpiPen safety and inspection considerations
- Administering EpiPen Injection
- EpiPen administration demonstration/video
- Caller guidance for EpiPen use
- Monitoring the patient after epinephrine administration

Module 3: Treating Non-Life-Threatening Allergic Reactions and Course Review

This module addresses treatment considerations for local, mild, and moderate allergic reactions while reinforcing the need to continually monitor the patient for worsening symptoms. Learners review the distinctions among reaction types, appropriate treatment considerations, and the circumstances in which a reaction may progress to a medical emergency.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Distinguish treatment considerations for local, mild, and moderate allergic reactions.
2. Recognize when symptoms indicate that an allergic reaction may be becoming more severe.
3. Explain the importance of monitoring the patient's airway, breathing, circulation, and overall condition.
4. Apply course concepts to scenarios involving allergic reactions and appropriate caller instructions.
5. Summarize the key information needed to recognize, assess, and respond to allergic-reaction emergencies.

Content/Activities

- Treating Local, Mild and Moderate Allergic Reactions
- Monitoring for changes in symptoms
- Recognizing progression toward anaphylaxis
- Review of allergic-reaction severity
- Review of common allergens and symptoms
- Review of EpiPen use and treatment considerations
- Test Your Knowledge
- Conclusion

Course Completion Criteria

To successfully complete this course and earn continuing education units hours, learners must achieve a minimum score of 75%. The quiz must be completed within 30 minutes.

- CE hours awarded: 1
- Certificate duration: 12 Months

Technical Requirements

- Desktop, laptop, or mobile device
- Speakers or headphones
- High-speed Internet access
- A current web browser