

Drug Reactions

Drug hypersensitivity reactions can be either immune mediated, such as in IgE or T cell mediated reactions, or non-immune-mediated (pseudoallergic). These types of reactions tend to be unpredictable and unrelated to drug dosage. Symptoms of serious hypersensitivity reactions include: angioedema, urticaria, wheezing, decreased oxygen saturations, throat tightness, gastrointestinal disturbance, hypotension, confusion and desquamating rashes.

Information Required

- History of drug(s) ingested and dose(s), including drug brand name
- Documented symptoms and severity, as well as interval between exposure and reaction
- Medication list at time of event, including over the counter, illicit and homeopathic drugs
- Past medical history (including asthma)
- Indication of suspected index drug, and likelihood that it or related drugs will be required again in the future

Investigations Required

- If suspecting anaphylaxis: order Tryptase within 3 hours of reaction, as well as a follow up tryptase at least 12 hours after the event
- If suspecting penicillin/cephalosporin allergy: order specific IgE to Amoxicilloyl, Penicilloyl V, Penicilloyl G and Cefaclor
- If suspecting isolated angioedema: order C4 level

Fax referrals to Allergy/Clinical Immunology Service

Royal Adelaide Hospital

Fax: 08 7074 6241

Red Flags

Red flags should prompt immediate GP referral to **Emergency Department**

- 🚩 Desquamation or rash and eosinophilia and liver function testing abnormalities
- 🚩 Cardiorespiratory compromise

Suggested GP Management

- Cease suspected drug
- Inform patients of potential cross-reactivity, and provide generic names and trade names of medications to avoid
- Immunology referral for desensitisation if medication is required urgently
- Medic alert for life-threatening reactions

Clinical Resources

- MJA Practice Essentials – Allergy 3. Drug hypersensitivity Francis C K Thien Med J Aust 2006; 185 (6): 333-338

General Information to assist with referrals and the referral templates for the RAH are available to download from the CALHN Outpatient Services website: <https://www.rah.sa.gov.au/health-professionals/outpatient-referrals>

Version	Date from	Date to	Amendment
1.0	June 2018	July 2020	Original