



## Avoiding Anaphylaxis During Summer

Summer is a time for enjoying the warm weather and being outside. However, people with severe allergies need to take precautions to avoid a severe allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis may involve the entire body. It can result in trouble breathing, loss of consciousness and even death. Anaphylaxis represents a medical emergency that requires immediate medical treatment and follow-up care by an Asthma and Allergy Center Clinician.

Common anaphylaxis triggers include food, stinging insects and exercise. Each year, about 40 people die after an anaphylactic reaction to insect stings, and about 100 people die from reactions to food. Below are tips to help avoid these triggers this summer.

### Food

Summer weather is perfect for picnics. But some picnic food could trigger an anaphylactic reaction. Children with food allergies need to keep in mind that what they eat is important, because eating the wrong food could cause anaphylaxis. When eating away from home remember the following:

- Know which foods you are allergic to. The most common are: milk, eggs, peanuts, wheat and shellfish
- Always inform your friends' parents of any food allergies
- Don't be afraid to ask what something is made of, knowing the ingredient could help avoid an attack
- Make sure the table you are eating at is clean. For some people, the slightest contamination could trigger an attack.

### Insects

Summer is the time of year when people are stung by bees, wasps, hornets, yellow jackets or fire ants. Common reactions to most stinging insects are temporary redness, swelling and itching at the site of the sting. But for people allergic to stinging insects, their immune systems will overreact to the venom injected by the insects resulting in severe reaction. Follow these tips to avoid stinging insects:

- Stay away from areas that the insects inhabit, this includes hives, nests and ant hills
- Hire a trained exterminator to destroy any hives and nests around your home
- Move slowly when encountered by a flying insect, do not "swat" them
- Avoid wearing bright colored clothing and heavy, sweet scented perfume when outdoors
- Keep all food covered until eaten

### Exercise

Summer is also a great time to be outside swimming, biking, playing ball or running. Although rare, exercise can also trigger anaphylaxis. It does not occur after every exercise session, and in some

cases, only occurs after eating certain foods before exercise. Have fun this summer but be aware of potential anaphylaxis triggers in your environment. If you have severe allergies, or have ever experienced an anaphylactic reaction, remember to always carry injectable epinephrine and make sure someone around you knows how to administer it in case you are unable to.