



Asthma/Anaphylaxis Protocol Required for Schools

All schools in Nebraska – public, parochial and private – are now prepared to respond to life-threatening asthma and anaphylaxis emergencies. The protocol *Emergency Response to Life-Threatening Asthma or Systemic Allergic Reactions (Anaphylaxis)* – see page 2 – trains school staff members to identify signs and symptoms of a “breathing emergency” and respond by calling 911, and administering EpiPen® followed by nebulized albuterol. All emergency response team members must be trained in CPR.

In a partnership with the Nebraska Department of Education, Attack on Asthma Nebraska (AOAN) is the non-profit organization assisting schools with education, training and procurement of medications and supplies.

AOAN received national recognition through acceptance of its abstract presentation at the June 2003 National Conference on Asthma, sponsored by the National Institutes of Health/National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute (NIH-NHLBI). As the only program of its kind in the country, Attack on Asthma Nebraska looks forward to national replication in the next several years.

What do healthcare professionals need to know?

- Nebraska Department of Education requires schools to follow the protocol through *Rule 59, Regulations for School Health and Safety* (Title 92, NAC, Chapter 59).
- The protocol addresses life-threatening emergencies and is meant to *prevent asthma or anaphylaxis deaths at school*.
- The **school’s EpiPen® and Albuterol** are to be used **for life-threatening emergencies only**, and **do not replace a child’s own prescribed medications** for asthma/allergy control and management. Parents are expected to ensure their children continue to carry MDI’s, EpiPen®, etc. and to have an Asthma/Allergy Action Plan or emergency medical plan on file with the school.
- Education and training provided by Attack on Asthma Nebraska includes general information on asthma and anaphylaxis to increase awareness among all school staff, so a child’s breathing problems are taken seriously and referred to a healthcare provider for proper diagnosis and treatment.
- Schools will seek at least one local physician signature on the protocol medical order (see pg 2).
- Medications will be obtained from a local pharmacist.

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**PROTOCOL MANDATED FOR ALL NEBRASKA SCHOOLS:
Emergency Response To Life-Threatening Asthma Or Systemic Allergic Reactions (Anaphylaxis)**

DEFINITION: Life-threatening asthma consists of an *acute episode of worsening airflow obstruction*. *Immediate action and monitoring are necessary.*

A systemic allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) is a severe response resulting in cardiovascular collapse (shock) after the injection of an antigen (e.g. bee or other insect sting), ingestion of a food or *medication*, or exposure to other allergens, such as animal fur, chemical irritants, pollens or molds, among others. The blood pressure falls, the pulse becomes weak, **AND DEATH CAN OCCUR**. Immediate allergic reactions may require emergency treatment and medications.

LIFE-THREATENING ASTHMA SYMPTOMS: Any of these symptoms may occur:

- Chest tightness
- Wheezing
- Severe shortness of breath
- Retractions (chest or neck “sucked in”)
- Cyanosis (lips and nail beds exhibit a grayish or bluish color)
- Change in mental status, such as agitation, anxiety, or lethargy
- A hunched-over position
- Breathlessness causing speech in one-to-two word phrases or complete inability to speak

ANAPHYLACTIC SYMPTOMS OF BODY SYSTEM: Any of the symptoms may occur within seconds. The more immediate the reactions, the more severe the reaction may become. Any of the symptoms present requires several hours of monitoring.

- Skin: warmth, itching, and/or tingling of underarms/groin, flushing, hives
- Abdominal: pain, nausea and vomiting, diarrhea
- Oral/Respiratory: sneezing, swelling of face (lips, mouth, tongue, throat), lump or tightness in the throat, hoarseness, difficulty inhaling, shortness of breath, decrease in peak flow meter reading, wheezing reaction
- Cardiovascular: headache, low blood pressure (shock), lightheadedness, fainting, loss of consciousness, rapid heart rate, ventricular fibrillation (no pulse)
- Mental status: apprehension, anxiety, restlessness, irritability

EMERGENCY PROTOCOL:

1. **CALL 911**
2. Summon school nurse if available. If not, summon designated trained, non-medical staff to implement emergency protocol
3. Check airway patency, breathing, respiratory rate, and pulse
4. Administer medications (EpiPen and albuterol) per standing order
5. Determine cause as quickly as possible
6. Monitor vital signs (pulse, respiration, etc.)
7. Contact parents immediately and physician as soon as possible
8. Any individual treated for symptoms with epinephrine at school will be transferred to medical facility

STANDING ORDERS FOR RESPONSE TO LIFE-THREATENING ASTHMA OR ANAPHYLAXIS:

- Administer an IM EpiPen-Jr. for a child less than 50 pounds or an adult EpiPen for any individual over 50 pounds
- Follow with nebulized albuterol (premixed) while awaiting EMS. If not better, may repeat times two, back-to-back
- Administer CPR, if indicated

(PHYSICIAN) Date

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*Approved by Attack on Asthma Nebraska Board of Directors: August 1, 2002.
Adopted by Nebraska State Board of Education: September 6, 2002; Mandated May 2, 2003, effective 10/1/03 by signature of Governor Mike Johanns.*