

INFORMATION ON ANAPHYLACTIC SHOCK

Severe reactions, such as anaphylactic shock are rare; however, it can happen. It is **life threatening!** Anaphylactic reaction can involve any of the following symptoms, which may appear alone or in any combination, regardless of the triggering allergen:

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS ARE:

- **Swelling of eyelids, lips, tongue**
- **Hives all over the body**
- **Vomiting and diarrhea**
- **Difficulty breathing**
- **Rapid heart beat**
- **Loss of consciousness**

Signs and symptoms of a severe allergic reaction can occur within minutes of exposure to an offending substance.

Reactions usually occur within two hours of exposure but, in rarer cases, can develop hours later.

Specific warning signs as well as the severity and intensity of symptoms can vary from person to person and sometimes from attack to attack in the same person.

Because of the unpredictability of reaction, early symptoms should never be ignored, especially if the person has suffered an anaphylactic reaction in the past.

It is important to note that anaphylaxis can occur without hives.

If an allergic person expresses any concern that a reaction might be starting, the person should always be taken seriously. When a reaction begins, it is important to respond immediately; following instructions

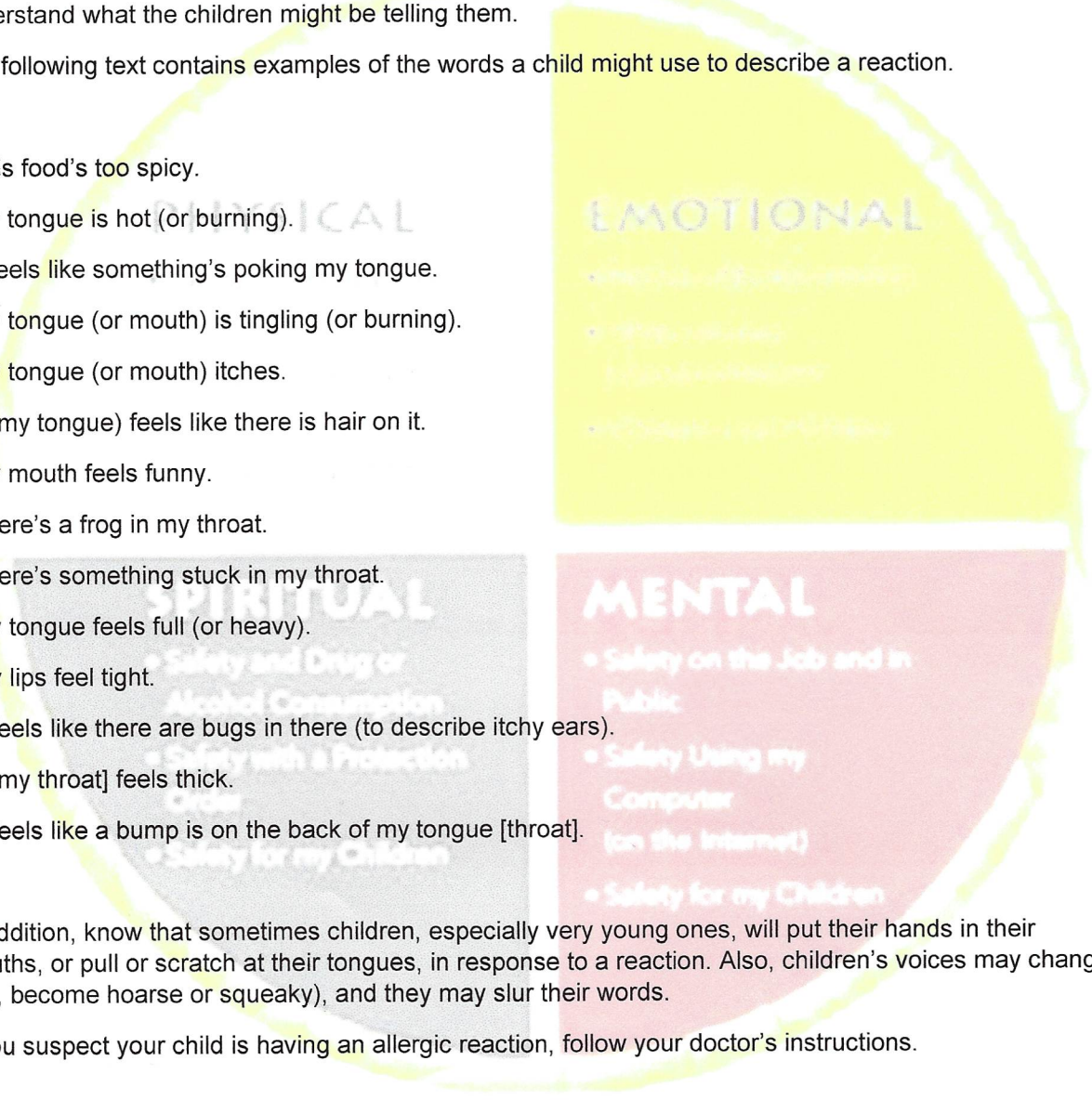
in the **Child's Individual Plan and Emergency Procedures** (see *Appendix B*). The cause of the reaction can be investigated later.

The most dangerous symptoms of an allergic reaction involve **breathing difficulties** caused by swelling of the airways or a **drop in blood pressure** indicated by dizziness/light headedness or feeling faint/weak.

How a Child Might Describe a Reaction

Children have unique ways of describing their experiences and perceptions, including allergic reactions. Precious time is lost when adults do not immediately recognize that a reaction is occurring or don't understand what the children might be telling them.

The following text contains examples of the words a child might use to describe a reaction.

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- This food's too spicy.
 - My tongue is hot (or burning).
 - It feels like something's poking my tongue.
 - My tongue (or mouth) is tingling (or burning).
 - My tongue (or mouth) itches.
 - It (my tongue) feels like there is hair on it.
 - My mouth feels funny.
 - There's a frog in my throat.
 - There's something stuck in my throat.
 - My tongue feels full (or heavy).
 - My lips feel tight.
 - It feels like there are bugs in there (to describe itchy ears).
 - It [my throat] feels thick.
 - It feels like a bump is on the back of my tongue [throat].

In addition, know that sometimes children, especially very young ones, will put their hands in their mouths, or pull or scratch at their tongues, in response to a reaction. Also, children's voices may change (i.e., become hoarse or squeaky), and they may slur their words.

If you suspect your child is having an allergic reaction, follow your doctor's instructions.

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Common Allergic Substances

Common Allergic Substances	Typical Reactions
Environmental	
Dust, mould, pollen, grass, trees	Itchy eyes and nose, nasal discharge, blocked nasal passages, sinus headache, sneezing, wheezing, coughing, shortness of breath
Animals and Birds	
Fur and feathers	Itchy eyes and nose, nasal discharge, etc.
Insects	
Stings from bees and wasps	Wheezing, hives, swelling of upper airway with difficulty breathing, swelling of face and anaphylactic shock in extreme cases
Food	
Eggs, peanuts, nuts, shellfish, milk and wheat (the latter two are common in infants)	Vomiting, diarrhea, bloody stools, plus symptoms as for insect venom
Medications and Chemicals	
Medical (e.g., antibiotics) and non-medical (e.g., fabric softener)	Any of the above reactions

Appendix H