

Anaphylaxis vs Vasovagal Reaction

A Comparison of Signs and Symptoms

Signs and Symptoms	Vasovagal Reaction	Anaphylaxis
Interval (after injection)	Sometimes before, usually after a few seconds to a few minutes after the injection	Within 30 minutes after injection; the most severe reactions begin with the first 15 minutes
Consciousness	Fainting Sensation, dizziness, loss of consciousness in some cases	Anxiety, which may progress to unconsciousness in severe cases
Breathing	Slow, with a few seconds of apnea in some cases	Respiratory difficulties; coughing, sneezing, wheezing, stridor
Pulse	Slow and weak, but regular	Rapid, weak and irregular
Skin	Diaphoresis, clammy skin, pallor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Warm skin, progressing to clammy and pallor • Pruritis and urticaria (>90% of cases) • Swelling of face and tongue
Blood Pressure	Hypotension	Hypotension (systolic pressure <90 mm Hg), which may progress to cardiovascular collapse
Gastro-Intestinal System	Nausea, vomiting	Nausea, vomiting, abdominal pains, diarrhea
Treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Place client in a recumbent position and elevate legs above head (or have client sit with head between their knees) • Ventilate the room well • Place cold, damp cloth on face • Give reassurance 	See Manitoba Health <i>Protocol for the Management of Suspected Anaphylaxis</i>
Prevention	Do not vaccinate a standing person. Before vaccinating, ask if the person tends to faint; if so ask the person to lie down	Before vaccinating, ask if the person has ever had an anaphylactic reaction to any product; if yes, ask for the name of the product and decide accordingly