A

ABCDE (Airway, Breathing, Circulation, Disability, Environment) - “ABCDE” is the way health professionals and first aiders remember the priorities when assessing and treating a patient who is experiencing an emergency. A, B and C ensure that air can get into the patient, that they are breathing and that their heart is beating. Disabilities (such as broken bones or unconsciousness) caused by the emergency event can be assessed next. Finally the patient needs protecting from the exposure in the environment.

adrenaline injector - A device used for a severe allergic reaction. Use the adrenaline injector as soon as there are signs of an anaphylactic reaction, while you wait for an ambulance. Two main brand names are currently AnaPen® and EpiPen®

allergen solution - A substance suspected of causing an allergic reaction (pollen, for example) dissolved in liquid

allergen - Something that can cause an allergic reaction

allergic condition - If you have an allergic condition, your body's defence system has become over-sensitive to something that is normally harmless. When the defence system fights off “attack” by whatever you are allergic to, the body shows the symptoms of an allergic reaction. These include asthma, rhinitis (hay fever), food allergy, eczema

allergic rhinitis - Seasonal allergic rhinitis is called hay fever. People with hay fever are allergic to pollen and spores. People who have perennial allergic rhinitis have symptoms all year round. They are usually allergic to allergens present in everyday life, such as house-dust mites, furry or feathery animals, certain chemicals or some foods

anaphylaxis (Ana – Fill – Axis) - An extreme and severe allergic reaction. The whole body is affected, often within minutes of exposure to the allergen but sometimes after hours

antibiotics - Drugs used to treat infections caused by bacteria. Antibiotics are not effective in treating infections caused by viruses

antihistamine - A type of medicine doctors use to treat allergies. It works by preventing the body's defence system from causing the symptoms of an allergic reaction. Two common antihistamine medicines are cetirizine (brand name Zirtek) and loratadine (brand name Clarityn). Some older antihistamines, such as chlorphenamine (brand name Piriton), often cause drowsiness and doctors should not prescribe these older antihistamines for regular use

asthma - A condition that affects the airways (the small tubes that carry air in and out of the lungs). The usual symptoms of asthma are coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath and tightness in the chest. Not everyone will get all of these symptoms. Some people experience them from time to time; a few people may experience these symptoms all the time. These symptoms are usually triggered by allergens such as house dust mite, colds, smoking and furry animals

B

biopsy - A medical test that involves taking some cells or tissue from the body to help work out what could be wrong

blood test - One common blood test to determine what substances a person is allergic to is the Specific IgE test

bronchodilator - A type of medicine that opens up the bronchi (the airways into the lungs) to make breathing easier
**Care pathway** - Sometimes different types of healthcare professionals get together to work out exactly what care they should provide to patients with a specific medical condition. They work out in detail what they should do and when, and in what order. They also describe how they expect patients treated in this way to improve. A scheme worked out in this way is a care pathway.

**Circulatory system** - Consisting of the heart, blood and blood vessels, the circulatory system carries nutrients, water and oxygen to all the cells of the body and takes carbon dioxide and other waste products away from the cells.

**Combination inhaler** - An inhaler (often purple or red) containing both a steroid and a long-acting bronchodilator in a single device.

**Conjunctivitis** - Inflammation of the conjunctiva (the thin delicate transparent membrane that covers the whites of the eyes and lines the inside of the eyelids). Conjunctivitis can be caused by irritation, by infection or by allergy. Allergic conjunctivitis cannot be passed from one person to another. It is common in people who have hay fever and asthma, and is caused by pollen and dust. It can also be caused by a reaction to certain medicines or foods, but this is very rare.

**Corticosteroids** - A class of medicines used to treat a variety of conditions where inflammation occurs.

**Digestive system** - A series of tubes that help convert our food into energy and building materials for the body. They include the oesophagus, stomach, small and large intestine.

**Drug challenge test** - When a child is given a drug in a supervised hospital environment. This is presently the best way to determine a true drug allergy.

**Eczema** - An itchy skin condition where the skin may be dry and red. In some skin types the skin may go darker not red.

**Elimination diet** - A type of diet that helps health professionals decide if you are allergic to a particular food. You first remove certain foods from your child’s diet to see if their symptoms improve. Then you reintroduce these food items one by one to see if the symptoms come back. If your child goes on an elimination diet you must make sure they are getting all the necessary nutrients.

**Emergency department** - Also called accident and emergency (A & E).

**Food challenge test** - A type of test where you are given (in increasing amounts) a food or medicine that you may be allergic to, to see if you react. This is a very safe test as long as it is done under careful supervision and can help clarify what foods are or are not safe to eat.

**Healthcare professional** - Someone, such as a doctor, nurse, dietitian, paramedic, or pharmacist, for example, who is trained to contribute to the medical care of a patient.

**House dust mite (HDM)** - Tiny insect that feeds on flakes of human skin in mattresses and pillows. Some symptoms of HDM allergy include sneezing, runny and itching nose and eyes.

**Immune system** - A body system that protects the body from foreign substances using specialised cells.

**Immunotherapy/desensitisation therapy** - A type of treatment that aims to help build up the body to help it fight an allergen.
**inhaler** - A device holding a medicine that you take by breathing in (inhaling)
**inhaler - preventer** - See preventer inhaler
**inhaler - reliever** - See rescue inhaler
**inhaler - rescue** - See rescue inhaler
**intravenous drip** - A method of giving a patient a large volume of fluid so that it goes straight into the bloodstream. A tiny hollow needle attached to a tube is inserted into a vein, usually in the hand or arm, and fluids are fed in drip by drip from a plastic bag suspended above the patient

**latex provocation test** - A type of test where you are exposed to to test if you may be allergic to it. This is a very safe test as long as it is done under careful supervision of trained health professionals

**natural rubber latex** is used in the production of numerous products, including gloves, exercise mats, balloons and some medical equipment
**nebuliser** - A device used to give medicines in the form of a mist that is then inhaled into the lungs
**nutrients** - What the body takes from food during digestion to keep itself healthy

**peak flow meter** - A small, hand-held machine used to monitor a person’s ability to breathe air out
**personal management plan / asthma action plan** - A plan developed between you and your healthcare professional to help you cope with your child’s allergic condition
**pollen** - Tiny, dust-like particles given off, usually in the spring or early summer, by certain types of trees, grasses, weeds and flowers
**preventer inhaler** - An inhaler (often brown or red) containing a steroid medicine. This sort of inhaler over a period of use gradually reduces inflammation in the airways and makes asthma attacks less likely to occur
**puffs** - The measured dose of medicine that comes out of an inhaler when you press the canister down in the plastic case

**refer/referral** - When a health professional ‘refers’ a patient, he or she formally asks another healthcare professional to take part in the medical care of the patient.
**reintroduce** - A process where the eliminated food is reintroduced into the diet to see if symptoms recur. This should only be done medical advice.
**rescue inhaler (sometimes called reliever inhaler)** - An inhaler (usually blue but may be a purple/red combination) used to treat a sudden asthma attack. These inhalers relieve symptoms quickly but do not treat the causes of asthma.
**respiratory distress syndrome** - A very serious and life-threatening medical condition in which the lungs are unable to provide enough oxygen for the rest of the body
**rhinitis (hay fever)** - Hay fever is sometimes called ‘seasonal allergic rhinitis’. People with hay fever are allergic to pollen and spores. Some people have symptoms all year round; this is called ‘perennial allergic rhinitis’. This is usually caused by an allergy to allergens present in everyday life, such as house-dust mites, furry or feathery animals, certain chemicals or some foods

**routine check-ups** - When someone has an ongoing medical condition healthcare professionals often arrange to see them at regular intervals for a routine check-up to see if there have been any changes. For a child with asthma these might be with your nurse, at the allergy clinic or with your GP
**S**

**Skin prick test** - This involves the doctor or nurse writing in pen on the skin (usually the arm or back), placing a drop of allergen solution by each mark, making a tiny skin scratch in each drop and waiting 15 minutes before measuring (with a ruler) the size of any bumps that have come up.

**Spacer** - A spacer is a large plastic or metal container, with a mouthpiece at one end and a hole for an inhaler at the other. Spacers make inhalers easier to use and more effective.

**Spirometry** - A machine that measures how well the lungs are working by measuring the amount (volume) and/or speed (flow) of air that can be breathed in and out.

**Spores** - Particles, like microscopically tiny seeds, given off by fungi and moulds.

**Steroid** - A class of medicines used to treat a variety of conditions that reduce swelling or inflammation. They are used in a variety of conditions and can be a cream or a pill.

**T**

**Trigger allergen** - What causes a particular person to have an allergic reaction.

**W**

**Wheezing** - Difficult, noisy breathing with a whistling sound. It is the sound of the air moving through the narrowed airways.