Allergic Reaction

Description/Introduction
An allergic reaction is the body’s reaction to anything a person is allergic to; it can be mild or severe. Before babysitting, remember to talk to the parents about caring for their child who has allergies.

Common allergies include:
- Bee stings.
- Poisonous plants (poison ivy, poison oak, poison sumac).
- Pollen.
- Animal dander.
- Medications.
- Food (tree nuts, peanuts, shellfish).
- Latex.

What to Look For
Mild signals include:
- Skin irritation (rash), hives or itching.

Moderate signals include:
- Nausea, vomiting or upset stomach.

Severe (anaphylaxis) signals include:
- Trouble breathing, including coughing and wheezing.
- A rash and/or unusual swelling on the child’s or infant’s skin.
- A feeling of tightness in the chest and throat.
- Swelling of the face, neck and tongue.
- Dizziness or confusion.
- Signs of shock (skin is cool, pale and sweaty).

Care
- Always follow the parents’ instructions.
- Remove the allergen to avoid further irritation.
- Monitor the child’s condition to ensure it does not get worse.
- Remember to always notify the parents and discuss any care provided.

If the reaction is severe:
- Call 9-1-1 immediately.
- Assist the child in taking his or her epinephrine, if available.
- Monitor the child’s condition.