**OEC Chapter 14: Allergies and Anaphylaxis**

**Major points:**

* Allergy is the body's overreaction to a foreign substance
* Allergies are caused by antigens called allergens. Allergens can be inhaled, ingested, injected or topical.
* Foods, insect bites and stings, environmental irritants, pollen, plants, molds, animal dander, medication, and chemicals are common causes of allergies.
* Many people do not know they have an allergy until they suffer from an allergic reaction.
* Peanuts are the number one allergy in the world
* Allergic reactions are categorized according to effects as mild, moderate, severe.
  + *Mild: Typically causes skin-related effects, such as rash, hives or itching. Typically s/s evolve slowly.*
  + *Moderate: Everything s/s as mild reaction but more pronounced and also affect the resp. and gastro. systems*. Typically s/s evolve slowly.
  + *Severe: Called Anaphylaxis, results in collapse of respiratory and circulatory systems. Can lead to shock where blood pressure falls to dangerously low levels and tissue hypoxia becomes critical. Anaphylaxis can be fatal unless rapidly treated. Show s/s early.*
* Allergic reactions may be prevented using the triple A approach: Awareness, Avoidance and Action.
* Don’t hesitate to assist the pt by administering an EpiPen to a patient who is experiencing a severe reaction.

***Key terms:*** *Allergen, Allergic Reaction, Anaphylaxis, Angioedema, Antibody, Histamine, Hypersensitivity, Pruritus, Urticaria.*

**Must Study**: Table: 14-1, Table 14-2, Table 14-3, Table 14-4 (don’t need to memorize), Figure 14-4, Figure 14-5, Figure 14-7, Figure 14-8, Figure 14-9

**Must Read:** OEC Skill 14-1, PATIENT ASSESSMENT FOR ALLERGIC REACTIONS, MANAGEMENT OF ALLERGIC REACTIONS.