

SFHAL3

Assess the likelihood of allergy in an individual



Overview

This standard is about the diagnosis of allergy within primary care and other non-allergy specific settings. It involves assessing, through a detailed history, the probability and extent to which a suspected allergy/ suspected allergies may be impacting on an individual's health. In primary care this will require a longer than normal consultation with the patient. It also involves beginning to identify and address the individual's allergy health needs through the commissioning of a limited choice of allergy tests and a decision as to whether to refer to specialist services.

Users of this standard will need to ensure that practice reflects up to date information and policies.

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Performance criteria

You must be able to:

- P1 identify features that indicate possible allergy and the potential for more severe reaction with future exposures from the individual's description of their concerns, the presenting problem and their observations
- P2 find out the nature, frequency, onset, pattern and severity of the individual's symptoms
- P3 obtain information by direct questions about suspected and/or known triggers, bearing in mind the possibility of the existence/presence of multiple allergy
- P4 find out what the individual may have done to alleviate the symptoms and the effectiveness of those measures
- P5 identify the likelihood of allergy and non allergy causes in the individual
- P6 consider whether lifestyle, emotions, occupation and/or stress may play a part in the individual's symptoms
- P7 decide whether the individual's symptoms are likely to have a non-allergic cause that needs intervention
- P8 if the individual's symptoms are not severe and do not indicate a potential for more severe reaction prescribe or recommend medication for symptom management in line with current best practice
- P9 arrange allergy tests against the suspected trigger(s) if management depends on the identification of the suspected trigger
- P10 refer the individual for specialist diagnosis if:
 - P10.1 presenting symptoms are severe, poorly controlled or any features indicate the potential for more severe reaction with future exposures
 - P10.2 the presenting problem impacts significantly on the individual's wellbeing and you are not able to resolve it
 - P10.3 you suspect food allergy in a child
 - P10.4 several systems in the individual may be affected
 - P10.5 there is a mismatch between history and test results
 - P10.6 there is treatment failure
- P11 review the clinical information about the individual, assess if there is a clear cause of allergy and identify the likely allergen or allergens informed by current best practice guidelines where they exist and emerging findings and evidence
- P12 if the individual's symptoms do not qualify for referral:
 - P12.1 prescribe or recommend medication for symptom management and control of related conditions in line with current best practice
 - P12.2 advise the individual on allergen avoidance informed by current best practice guidelines where they exist and emerging findings and evidence
- P13 explain the importance of proper diagnosis and the risks of self-diagnosis

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- and treatment of allergy by non-validated practitioners
- P14 give the individual the opportunity to ask questions, agreeing that they may contact you if they have further concerns

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Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

- K1 common allergic conditions and their presentation
- K2 the influence of an individual's environment on allergy
- K3 the impact of allergy on morbidity and mortality
- K4 acute severe allergic conditions, their development and risks
- K5 conditions that can coexist in allergy and the way in which they affect or are affected by allergy
- K6 current guidelines on allergy diagnosis and management
- K7 recent developments in the diagnosis and management of allergic conditions
- K8 the use, availability and interpretation of diagnostic tests
- K9 how to distinguish allergy symptoms from conditions with a similar presentation
- K10 evidence based decision making based on current guidelines on disease diagnosis and management
- K11 how to distinguish a severe allergic reaction from a mild/moderate reaction and strategies for management
- K12 current prescribing and treatment guidelines for allergic conditions with co-morbidities
- K13 pharmacological management of allergic disease
- K14 local availability of allergy services
- K15 care pathway options for the management of allergy
- K16 information on organisations for patients
- K17 reliable evidence-based and unbiased information and educational resources about allergy

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Additional Information

External Links

This standard links with the following dimension within the NHS Knowledge and Skills Framework (October 2004):

Dimension: HWB6 Assessment and treatment planning

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Developed by	Skills for Health
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Version number	1
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Date approved	June 2010
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Indicative review date	June 2012
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Validity	Current
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Status	Original
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Originating organisation	Skills for Health
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Original URN	AL3
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Relevant occupations	Health, Public Services and Care; Health Professionals
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Suite	Allergy Services
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Key words	Acute severe allergic reaction, allergen, anaphylaxis, angioedema, asthma, conjunctivitis, eczema, gastrointestinal symptoms, medication, rhinitis, symptoms trigger
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