



AFP in Practice questions are designed to get you started in a small group learning (SGL) activity in your practice or with colleagues. Requirements to earn 40 Category 1 CPD points for a SGL activity are: minimum of four and a maximum of 10 people, minimum of 8 hours of discussion in a year, and at least two GPs. Groups may include anyone else who has an interest (ie. practice nurses, community health workers, allied health professionals). A kit with all the instructions and forms you need is available at [www.racgp.org.au/afpinpractice](http://www.racgp.org.au/afpinpractice). You can also earn Category 2 points based on these questions at AFP practice challenge. Visit [www.racgp.org.au/practicechallenge](http://www.racgp.org.au/practicechallenge)

Carolyn O'Shea

## Learning objectives

After completion of this activity participants will be able to:

- obtain and interpret a history of potential allergy and manage appropriately
- integrate information to develop guidelines for rational investigation and referral of potential allergic conditions in their practice
- prepare patient information on allergy prevention
- devise a method to improve communication regarding over-the-counter (OTC) medications
- identify any weakness in your practice medical records in respect to allergy and propose a method to improve record keeping.

## Category 1 – SGL questions

### Domain 1 – Communication skills and the patient-doctor relationship

ICPC codes: A92, A97; process code –45

'I think my child must be allergic...' can be heard on a regular basis in the consulting room. At times there is good reason for a parent to be suspicious; at other times the reasons that have led to this idea are dubious. Strong communication and consulting skills in the patient-doctor relationship are required in these consultations.

\* Suggested learning activities: in pairs, each play the role of the parent/patient based on a consultation you can recall. Ideally in one case the parent's concern will be justified, in the other not so. Role play the consultations, including taking a history and managing the consultation. After each pair has taken a turn, discuss as a group things you found worked well or problems you encountered in the consultations. Or as a group do a 'fishbowl' interview [a 'fishbowl' interview is where one person is the patient and remains in that role, the role of the doctor is rotated between other group members who each jump in and out of the same consultation picking up from where their colleague has left off] to take a relevant history of the concern and then manage the consultation as appropriate. The group can 'replay' different sections of the consultation trying different approaches. They can also stop and start and discuss possible ideas and approaches. Once the consultation has ended, try another one with a different patient and scenario.

### Domain 2 – Applied professional knowledge and skills

ICPC codes: A92; process codes –32, –34, –47

The AFP articles on allergy have reminded you that a test or referral is only as good as the thought behind the test.

\* Suggested learning activity: as a group develop guidelines about the way you will investigate and refer patients with potential allergy.

### Domain 3 – Population health and the context of general practice

ICPC codes: A92, R96, R97, S87, S88, S98–45

General practitioners are frequently asked about allergy prevention or told by patients the steps they are considering taking to prevent allergy. There is a large amount of information to cover in response to an apparently simple question.

\* Suggested learning activity: as a group outline a patient information handout, then divide the outline between the group members and each write a section. Add the sections together to make a patient handout or article for the practice newsletter.

### Domain 4 – Professional and ethical role

ICPC codes: R97, A92–50

Many medications used for allergies are OTC medications (eg. antihistamines). This is particularly the case with allergic rhinitis. You suspect that some patients are getting confused or not taking the recommended OTC medications and want to improve the communication between the patient, the pharmacist and yourself.

\* Suggested learning activity: develop a system to improve communication about OTC medications. Areas to consider may include recording in medication lists and developing a patient information sheet with details about OTC medications. If the group has different needs, you may need to break into smaller groups and then come together to describe your plans.

### Domain 5 – Organisational and legal dimensions

ICPC codes: A92, A98

Medical records are an important part of clinical care and the mention of allergy reminds you of a few areas where your medical records are vital.

\* Suggested learning activities: consider recording of allergies (drug and nondrug, but medically potentially relevant such as egg) in medical records. Develop an audit to assess current practice and then an intervention to improve. Or, people with anaphylaxis usually carry adrenaline auto-injectors and GPs can be involved in repeat prescriptions for these medications, which require training to use and care that they are not out of date. What systems does your practice have for: identifying who needs these medications, who has been trained, that medications are in date, and if review by an allergist is needed? Discuss as a group and brainstorm potential solutions to any deficiencies identified. Another potential activity relates to anaphylaxis. Anaphylaxis is a medical emergency. How would your practice manage this type of emergency? Share with other group members. Things to consider may be accessibility of medications and equipment, easy access to dosing recommendations, and potential roles of other staff. Consider if your current systems could be improved, and if so, how.