



## **Family Asthma & Allergy Center**

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### **Local Anesthetic/Dental Anesthetic Allergy**

Dentists and oral surgeons use multiple classes of anesthetic drugs prior to dental procedures. These drugs are capable of causing allergic reactions, the most frequent culprit being a class of anesthetics called “caines”. Lidocaine is the most commonly used local anesthetic across most medical settings. It can be used with or without epinephrine, a pharmaceutical agent that promotes vasoconstriction and decreases absorption of lidocaine.

“Caines” are categorized into two different groups based on their chemical structure - esters and amides. Allergic reactions to either group can be mild or severe. Mild symptoms include local swelling and itching, whereas severe reaction may present with generalized hives, difficulty breathing, low blood pressure, and life threatening anaphylaxis.

If a lidocaine allergy is suspected, a referral to an allergist is necessary to find a safe alternative anesthetic for future procedures or surgeries. A sample anesthetic (from your dentist or surgeon) should be brought to the allergist for testing. At our office, we will perform a skin test with serial dilutions, until 0.5 ml of the anesthetic is administered subcutaneously. Absence of any local or systemic allergic symptoms in an appropriate observation period rules out IgE mediated allergy and ensures that the your risk of anaphylaxis from the tested drug is no greater than that of general population.

Testing performed at the Family Asthma and Allergy Center meets or exceeds current American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology (AAAAI) guidelines for local anesthetic allergy.