

# Epinephrine Pen

## Patient and Family Education

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**This teaching sheet contains general information only. Talk with your child's doctor or a member of your child's healthcare team about specific care of your child.**

### **What is an epinephrine auto-injector (epinephrine pen)?**

An epinephrine auto-injector (epinephrine pen) is a way to help treat a severe allergic reaction. There are several brands of epinephrine pens, and each works in a slightly different way. They all:

- Look like a pen and consist of a dose of medicine, a chamber to hold the medicine and a needle.
- Give your child a dose of a medicine called epinephrine. This medicine is used to treat severe allergic reactions.
- Need to be injected into a muscle to work. This is usually in the outer thigh (upper leg) muscle. You may inject it through your child's clothes if you need to do so.
- Always keep the epinephrine pen with you at all times.

**NOTE:** Some pen cartons may contain a blank “dummy” pen to use for training.

- It looks a lot like the regular epinephrine pen.
- The training pen does **NOT** contain any medicine. It will not help your child during an allergic reaction.
- Once you no longer need the training pen for practice, throw it away.

### **When should an epinephrine pen be used?**

An epinephrine pen is used for sudden, severe allergic reactions. A severe allergic reaction is called anaphylaxis (an-a-fil-ak'-sis) and is life threatening. Anaphylaxis is an emergency and needs to be treated **right away**. Signs of a severe allergic reaction may include 1 or more of these:

- Trouble breathing
- Wheezing and coughing
- Hoarseness (changes in the way the voice sounds)
- Hives
- Swelling of the face, lips or tongue
- Severe itching
- Severe rash
- Feeling very anxious

If your child has any of these signs and you think he may be having an allergic emergency, use the epinephrine pen **right away and then call 911**.

### **What dose of epinephrine does my child need?**

Your child's dose is based on his body weight. Your child's doctor will prescribe the dose that is right for him. Each pen contains 1 dose of epinephrine.

- Sometimes 1 dose of epinephrine is not enough. Your child's doctor may prescribe more than 1 epinephrine pen. If so, follow your child's doctor's instructions.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

# Epinephrine Pens, continued

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## What causes severe allergic reactions?

Allergic reactions may occur from many causes including:

- Insect bites or stings
- Foods
- Drugs
- Latex

## How do I use an epinephrine pen?

Each brand of epinephrine pen works in a slightly different way.

- Read the instructions that come in each package as soon as you get it. This helps you learn about using the epinephrine pen **before** you need to use it in an emergency.
- When you pick up the pen at your local drug store, ask the pharmacist to explain how to use it.

The instructions for some pens are included below. Ask your pharmacist or doctor if you have any questions about how to use your child's epinephrine pen correctly and safely.

### How to use EpiPen (epinephrine) Auto-Injector

1. Remove the EpiPen Auto-Injector from the plastic carrying case.
2. Pull off the blue safety release cap.
3. Swing and firmly push the orange tip against the mid-outer thigh.
4. Hold it there for about 10 seconds.
5. Remove the pen, and massage the area for 10 seconds.

### How to use Auvi-Q (epinephrine injection, USP)

1. Remove the outer case of Auvi-Q. This will start the voice instructions.
2. Pull off the red safety guard.
3. Place the black end against the mid-outer thigh.
4. Press firmly, and hold it there for 5 seconds.
5. Remove from thigh.

### How to use Adrenaclick (epinephrine injection, USP auto-injector)

1. Remove the outer case.
2. Remove the grey caps labeled "1" and "2".
3. Place the red rounded tip against the mid-outer thigh.
4. Press down hard until the needle goes in the skin.
5. Hold it there for 10 seconds. Remove from thigh.

## After you use an epinephrine pen, stay with your child and call 911.

Take the used epinephrine pen with you to the hospital emergency room for proper disposal.

## How do I know my child got an entire dose of the medicine?

The medicine is released when you press the epinephrine pen against your child's thigh. If you can see the needle when you remove the epinephrine pen from your child's thigh, the medicine has been released.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**

## **Epinephrine Pens, continued**

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### **Can I re-use an epinephrine pen?**

No. The epinephrine pen should only be used 1 time. Once you use the epinephrine pen, get another one at your drug store **right away** so you have it to use in case of another emergency.

### **What will my child feel after I use the epinephrine pen?**

Using the epinephrine pen causes very little pain. Your child may feel a faster heartbeat, nervousness, sweating, dizziness and headache. These feelings usually go away in a short time with rest.

### **When should I call my child's doctor?**

- After using the epinephrine pen, **call 911 right away**.
- The effects of the medicine begin to wear off after 10 to 20 minutes. Your child may need more care at the hospital.
- Tell the doctor that you have used the epinephrine pen on your child.
- Also, call your child's doctor if you have any concerns about how your child looks or feels once you get home from the hospital.

### **Do epinephrine pens expire?**

Yes. The expiration date is printed on the epinephrine pen.

### **Can my child use an epinephrine pen himself?**

Many older children use the epinephrine pen themselves. Talk with your child's doctor about when to teach your child to use the epinephrine pen and call 911 himself.

### **Who else needs to have an epinephrine pen for my child?**

Check with your child's doctor about who should have an epinephrine pen and learn how to use it for your child. Others may include:

- Daycare or school workers.
- Other close relatives, such as grandparents.
- Other adults that may be around your child for long periods of time, such as scout leaders or team coaches.

If your child has a bad allergy, have him wear a medical ID necklace or bracelet at all times. You can buy one at your local drug store or on the internet.

**In case of an urgent concern or emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency department right away.**