

General use adrenaline autoinjectors (EpiPen®)

Information for parents and legal guardians

All Department for Education preschools and schools must have a general use adrenaline autoinjector so they can provide emergency medication to treat anaphylaxis. The department specifies that preschools will keep an EpiPen® Jr (0.15mg adrenaline) and schools will keep an EpiPen® (0.3mg adrenaline).

The 'general use' adrenaline autoinjector is not a substitute for children and young people who are at high risk of anaphylaxis, and who have been prescribed an adrenaline autoinjector. In these cases, you need to notify the preschool or school that your child is at risk of anaphylaxis and provide an Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) action plan.

General use EpiPens®

Adrenaline autoinjectors for *general use* are most likely to be used when:

- an individual who is known to be at risk of anaphylaxis does not have their own device immediately accessible or the device is out of date
- a second dose of adrenaline is required before an ambulance has arrived
- an individual's device has misfired or accidentally been discharged
- a previously diagnosed individual with mild allergy who was not prescribed an adrenaline autoinjector has their first episode of anaphylaxis
- less commonly, an undiagnosed individual has a first episode of anaphylaxis and was not previously known to be at risk (eg a child having their first reaction at school).

Keeping your child safe

Our preschools and schools must have sufficient staff on site with:

- current first aid training (that includes cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and how to administer emergency asthma and anaphylaxis medication)
- training through the ASCIA anaphylaxis e-training course for schools and childcare
- practical training in how to use an EpiPen®

In an emergency, if there is no other person nearby who has had basic training in the use of an adrenaline autoinjector, it is reasonable that someone without specific training will administer adrenaline by following instructions on the device. Where there are reasonable grounds for believing an individual is having an acute allergic reaction, adrenaline will be administered.

Taking precautions

An ambulance will be called in all cases where adrenaline is administered and care for the person will be transferred to the ambulance officer. The patient will be taken to hospital to remain under observation until symptoms have resolved. No serious or permanent harm is likely to occur from mistakenly administering adrenaline to an individual who is not experiencing anaphylaxis. Temporary side effects of adrenaline may include increased heart rate, trembling and paleness.

Further information

Contact your preschool or school for further information.

