



# Preventing and Treating Anaphylaxis

## in children and adolescents

### What is anaphylaxis?

- Anaphylaxis is a severe allergic reaction that can cause death within minutes.
- Anaphylaxis affects the whole body, inside and out.
- Not all reactions will be the same.
- Some will be more severe or have different symptoms.

### Symptoms of anaphylaxis:

Use your auto-injector right away if two or more of these happen:

- Hives (a raised rash on the skin)
- Reddened skin
- Itchiness
- Swelling of the mouth, tongue, throat or face
- Trouble swallowing or speaking
- Trouble breathing, cough, or wheeze
- Stomach pain or nausea
- Throwing up
- Diarrhea
- Dizziness
- Losing consciousness (fainting)

### Preventing anaphylaxis

- Avoid the cause of your reaction. If you have a food allergy, avoid that food. If you don't know what is in a food, don't eat it.
- Make sure the people around you know what you are allergic to, especially at places like daycare, school, or work.

### Treating anaphylaxis

Epinephrine (also called adrenaline) is the only medicine that can stop anaphylaxis. Your body naturally makes epinephrine, but to stop a severe allergic response your body needs much more than it can make by itself. Epinephrine starts to work within minutes and helps your body work normally again. Auto-injectors like EpiPen® and Allerject™ use a needle to give epinephrine. Use your auto-injector right away if you have anaphylaxis.

- Always use your auto-injector as soon as possible. The earlier, the better!
- Always carry your auto-injector and know how to use it. It can save your life!
- Make sure everyone around you knows how to use your auto-injector. Young children and people who can't use an auto-injector on their own must have caregivers that know how to use it.
- Carry more than one dose of epinephrine when you travel or are more than 30 minutes away from emergency medical help (usually a hospital)
- Antihistamine medicine will NOT prevent or stop anaphylaxis. Always use your auto-injector first.

***If in doubt, use your auto-injector!***





## Using an auto-injector

### EpiPen®

1. Hold EpiPen® in your fist
2. Pull off **blue** cap
3. Place **orange** tip against mid outer thigh
4. Push against leg firmly until you hear the “**click**”
5. Hold in place for 5 seconds
6. Remove EpiPen® and get Emergency help

### Allerject™

1. Pull Allerject™ from the outer case
2. Listen to instructions, if needed
3. Pull off **red** safety guard
4. Place **black** end against mid outer thigh
5. Push firmly until you hear a “**click and hiss**”
6. Hold firmly in place. Allerject™ will count back from “5 to 0”
7. Remove Allerject™ and get Emergency help.

## After using the auto-injector

Call 911 and get emergency help right away. You must be seen by a doctor. Anaphylaxis may continue or happen again even after using your auto-injector. Some reactions may need more than one dose of epinephrine. You should be observed for 4 to 6 hours in the emergency room after having epinephrine to make sure you are safe.

- After using an auto-injector it is normal to feel shaky or anxious, look pale, and feel your heart beating faster. These side effects normally go away in 20-30 minutes.

- Use a second dose of epinephrine if symptoms have not gotten better in 15 minutes or if you start to have anaphylaxis again before getting emergency help.
- Take your auto-injector with you to the hospital so it can be thrown out safely.
- Get a new auto-injector as soon as possible.

## Resources for anaphylaxis & auto-injectors

### Food Allergy Canada:

[www.foodallergycanada.ca](http://www.foodallergycanada.ca)  
[www.allergysupportcentre.ca](http://www.allergysupportcentre.ca)

(for teens: [www.whyriskit.ca](http://www.whyriskit.ca))

EpiPen: [www.epipen.ca](http://www.epipen.ca)

Allerject: [www.allerject.ca](http://www.allerject.ca)

### The Children’s Allergy & Asthma Education Centre (CAAEC)

Phone: 204-787-2551  
FE125-685 William Avenue  
Winnipeg, MB R3E 0Z2  
Phone: (204) 787-2551  
Fax: (204) 787-5040  
Email: [caaec@hsc.mb.ca](mailto:caaec@hsc.mb.ca)

### Family Information Library, HSC Children’s Hospital

Items can be mailed to you free of charge-visit: [www.hsc.mb.ca/family-info-library.html](http://www.hsc.mb.ca/family-info-library.html) to search our catalogue of resources.  
Phone: 204-787-1012  
Email: [familylibrary@hsc.mb.ca](mailto:familylibrary@hsc.mb.ca)

Next Review: March 2024