

## Information for Patients with Severe Allergies

You have been given this fact sheet because you are at risk of anaphylaxis, or you have just had your first episode which has brought you to hospital.

This information will help you understand how to manage your anaphylaxis while you are in hospital, and when you go home.

### Key messages

- Immediately tell a staff member if you use your auto-injector
- Make sure you discuss all your allergies and past reactions with the staff caring for you
- Keep your adrenaline (epinephrine) auto-injector (commonly known by the trade name EpiPen®) with you when you are hospital
- Staff will discuss with you, your family, or your carer where to keep your auto-injector so you can access it quickly and easily.



### What is anaphylaxis?

Anaphylaxis is a potentially life-threatening allergic reaction that should always be treated as a medical emergency. It occurs as the body reacts to a food or substance that it mistakenly believes is harmful.

### Onset and symptoms

The onset of anaphylaxis usually happens quickly – or within 20 minutes. When food is the trigger, there may be a delay of up to two hours.

With anaphylaxis, you may notice:

- You have difficult or noisy breathing
- It is hard to talk or you have a hoarse voice
- Your tongue becomes swollen, or your throat becomes tight
- You feel dizzy or faint
- You get a rash; sometimes but not always.

Vomiting and abdominal pain are symptoms of anaphylaxis to insect allergy or medication. Children may become pale and floppy.

## Adrenaline (epinephrine) Auto-injectors

Adrenaline (epinephrine) is used to treat anaphylaxis. If you have been diagnosed as being at risk of anaphylaxis, your doctor should have prescribed you an adrenaline auto-injector. It is also possible to buy them without a prescription from a pharmacy. You should also have an anaphylaxis action plan.

An auto-injector is only part of managing your anaphylaxis. It is important that you, and people close to you, are familiar with how to use it.

### While you are in hospital

- Tell staff if you have brought your adrenaline auto-injector with you. If not, ask someone to bring it from home
- Staff will go through a checklist with you to confirm you know how and when to use your adrenaline auto-injector during your stay
- If you experience symptoms of anaphylaxis:
  - Return to your bed, lie flat – do not walk or stand
  - Immediately press your buzzer to alert a staff member, and call out for attention if you can
  - Use your auto-injector and do not discard it
  - Tell staff you have used your auto-injector
  - Staff will call for immediate assistance to provide further treatment.

### When you leave hospital

- Take your adrenaline auto-injector home with you
- If you have used your adrenaline auto-injector in hospital, make sure staff provide you with a replacement
- If you have experienced anaphylaxis during your hospital stay, you will need to see your GP within five days of going home
- Your GP will refer you to a specialist for follow up if such a service was not available at the hospital.

### More information

- Anaphylaxis action plans, online training and demonstrations can be found at: [www.allergy.org.au/anaphylaxis](http://www.allergy.org.au/anaphylaxis) and <https://allergyfacts.org.au/resources/videos-from-a-aa>
- Practice devices are available from a variety of sources, including: [allergyfacts.org.au/shop/training-accessories](http://allergyfacts.org.au/shop/training-accessories).

**Follow up appointment with Doctor/Clinic** .....

**Date:**    /    /    **Time** ..... **Contact number** .....

**Doctor/Clinic Address** .....

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