

EpiPen® IN YOUR FIRST AID KIT

Updated May 2021

This fact sheet is intended to give information on the supply and use of an EpiPen® as part of a first aid kit in the performing arts and live event industries. An EpiPen® and EpiPen Jr® Auto-Injectors are for the emergency treatment of life-threatening allergic reactions (anaphylaxis) caused by allergens.

REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS

WorkSafeBC Requirements

Although there is no specific regulation or guideline relating to having or using an EpiPen® as part of a first aid kit, the OFA Reference and Training Manual states that "in the management of an allergic reaction, management is supportive, with the Attendant treating the symptoms present." (see [Administration](#) on page 2). Immediate emergency medical treatment is still necessary if administering epinephrine. You will need professional care to determine whether additional epinephrine, steroids, antihistamines, or other treatments are required.

What is an EpiPen®?

EpiPen® and EpiPen Jr® are auto injectors that deliver a pre-measured dose of epinephrine, a drug form of the hormone adrenaline that the body produces on its own. Epinephrine can help reverse the effects of an allergic reaction by:

- Relaxing the muscles in your airways to make breathing easier.
- Helping to reverse the rapid and dangerous decrease in blood pressure.
- Relaxing the muscles in the stomach, intestines, and bladder.

What to know about epinephrine

Allergists advise that an epinephrine auto-injector be the first line of treatment for anaphylaxis.

Like all medicines, epinephrine may cause side effects. Some side effects from using epinephrine may include a rapid heart rate, paleness, dizziness, weakness, tremors, or headache.



ATTENTION

Anaphylaxis occurs when the body's immune system reacts to a particular allergen or irritant.

Symptoms of allergy include



Blotchy areas of reddish-pink swelling of skin that are very itchy (hives)



Difficulty breathing



Tightness in the throat or upper airway



Rapid/weak pulse



Dizziness or anxiety



Wheezing



Abdominal cramps



Possible tight discomfort across the chest

- Medical alert bracelet or necklace
- Numbness or tingling
- Swelling of tongue and face
- Weakness
- Restlessness
- Diarrhea or vomiting



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Administration

If an EpiPen® must be administered to a person that is conscious:

- Use two hands on the injector when removing the blue safety cap – not doing so may result in damage to the injector.
- A first aid attendant may assist the patient by helping to hold the injector at a 90-degree angle to the skin and pressing it against the thigh muscle. Practice this together so the first aid attendant knows where to find the EpiPen®, and how to help should the need arise.
- Once the “click” is heard, hold the pen in place for a full 10 seconds. Massaging the area will aid in quicker dispersal.



Blue to the sky



Orange to the thigh



Call 911
Or go to the emergency room immediately

Images credited to [EpiPen®](#). Follow the link to order free training kits and instructional posters.

An attendant may administer an EpiPen® to an unresponsive patient if the following three criteria are met:

1. There is history of exposure to an allergen.
2. The patient shows signs allergic reaction.
3. There is no known reason not to give the EpiPen® for example, if the patient has a known heart condition.

In addition, if administering an EpiPen® to an unresponsive patient, then certain other observations should be made. These can include any visual signs that would conclude the patient is suffering from an allergic reaction (such as a visible bee sting, hives, and swelling about the face and neck) or knowing that the patient was trying to administer the EpiPen® before they went unconscious (an unused EpiPen® is in the patient's hand or laying nearby).



SAFE PRACTICE

Workers who may suffer from a severe allergic reaction should inform their employer and indicate whether they carry an EpiPen® (auto-injector). This will allow the employer to provide assistance.