

Severe Allergic Reaction (Anaphylaxis) Medication Administration—Epinephrine Auto-Injector

Things to consider:

- Identify symptoms of a severe allergic reaction as indicated on the emergency action plan, if possible. These may include obstructive swelling of the lips, tongue, and/or throat; trouble swallowing; shortness of breath or wheezing; turning blue; drop in blood pressure; feeling faint, confused, weak, passing out; loss of consciousness; chest pain; a weak or thready pulse; and/or a sense of “impending doom”.
- Given that when a child is having a severe allergic reaction, it can be a stressful situation, it is highly recommended that you familiarize yourself with the student’s severe allergic reaction emergency action plan beforehand.
- In certain circumstances, the child may have been trained to self-administer the injection. Check the child’s emergency action plan for specific details.
- If your school participates in a stock epinephrine program, be sure to:
 - Know your school’s plan and protocol regarding stock epinephrine administration
 - Know the storage locations of the stock epinephrine, and
 - Have proper training to administer stock epinephrine
- Your school nurse or other licensed health care professional must review the epinephrine procedure with you to ensure that you have the skills to perform this emergency medication administration.
- Store the severe allergic reaction emergency action plan and epinephrine auto-injector in a location that is easily accessible during a severe allergic reaction.
- Be sure to check the expiration date on the medication package periodically, to ensure that the medication is not expired during an emergency situation. Also, make sure that the medication is clear and replace the medication if it is discolored.
- As this is an emergency situation, it is important to act quickly while ensuring everyone’s safety.

Needed supplies:

- Severe Allergic Reaction Medication (Epipen®, Adrenaclick® or other generic epinephrine auto-injector)
- Gloves
- Approved Sharps Container
- Alcohol Pad (if possible)
- Band-Aid (if possible)

Procedure for medication administration:

1. Identify that symptoms of a severe allergic reaction are present and that based on the child's severe allergic reaction emergency action plan, medication needs to be given.
2. Call for assistance. Ask that another school staff personnel call 911 or emergency medical services and notify parent. Remove other students from the area, as necessary.
3. Gather needed supplies and place on a clean surface near the student.
4. Quickly talk to the student and evaluate the situation. Prepare the student.
5. Position student, providing as much privacy as possible. The auto-injector can be given through clothing in most circumstances. Depending on the age of the student and his/her cooperation level, you may need to stabilize the leg before injecting, so that the child does not kick or move the leg during injection. You may need to ask someone else to assist you with this.
6. Quickly review the medication administration form, the medical provider or district protocol/plan form, and the parent/guardian consent form, if available, as you review the "5 Rights" of medication administration. Check the auto-injector and order to be sure it is:
 - a. For the right child
 - b. The right medication
 - c. The right dose (an approximation of the child's weight may be needed, if using a stock epinephrine auto-injector)
 - d. Being given at the right time and
 - e. Being given by the right route.
7. Wash your hands, if possible. In a true emergency situation, there may not be time to do this step.
8. Put on gloves.
9. Quickly review the Five Rights once again while checking the medication to be sure it is:
 - a. For the right child
 - b. The right medication
 - c. The right dose (an approximation of the child's weight may be needed)
 - d. Being given at the right time and
 - e. Being given by the right route.
10. EpiPen® Administration
 - a. Remove the EpiPen® auto-injector from the container.
 - b. Remove the blue safety guard from the pen.
 - c. Firmly press the orange tip against the student's mid-outer thigh until click is felt, and hold for 3 seconds. The pen can be given through clothing in most circumstances.
 - d. Remove and massage the area for 10 seconds.

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- e. Replace the pen back into its container and place it into an appropriate sharps container or hand to emergency medical responders.
11. Generic Epinephrine Auto-injector Administration
 - a. Remove the auto-injector from its container.
 - b. Remove the caps labeled “1” and “2”.
 - c. Firmly press the red rounded tip down hard against the student’s mid-outer thigh until the needle penetrates and hold for 10 seconds. The injector can be given through clothing in most circumstances.
 - d. Remove from thigh and massage the area for 10 seconds.
 - e. Take precaution with the exposed needle while replacing the injector back into the container using the scoop method or dispose of the injector directly into an appropriate sharps container.
 12. If alone with the student and you have not already called 911 or emergency medical services and notified parents, do so now.
 13. Monitor student’s pulse and respirations.
 14. Once the emergency medical responders arrive, inform them of the medication administered, including the type of medication, dose, and the time given.
 15. If not done already, dispose of the injector in an approved sharps disposal container or give to the emergency medical responders.
 16. Remove gloves and wash hands.
 17. Document medication administration in student’s medication administration log.
 18. Follow up with the parent or guardian and healthcare provider, as needed.

References:

- Adrenaclick® (n.d.). *How to use Adrenaclick (epinephrine injection, USP auto-injector)*. Retrieved from http://www.adrenaclick.com/how_to_use_adrenaclick_epinephrine_injection_USP_auto_injector.php
- EpiPen® EpiPen Jr® (2016). *How to Use Your EpiPen® (epinephrine injection) Auto - Injector*. <https://www.epipen.com/about-epipen/how-to-use-epipen>
- Food Allergy Research & Education (2015). *FOOD ALLERGY & ANAPHYLAXIS EMERGENCY CARE PLAN*. Retrieved from <http://www.foodallergy.org/file/emergency-care-plan.pdf>
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