

Adrenaline (Epinephrine) Devices for General Use

Frequently Asked Questions

This document has been developed by [ASCIA](#), the peak professional body of clinical immunology/allergy specialists in Australia and New Zealand. ASCIA information is based on published literature and expert review, is not influenced by commercial organisations and is not intended to replace medical advice. For patient or carer support contact [Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia](#) or [Allergy New Zealand](#).

Q 1: What are adrenaline devices for general use?

Adrenaline (epinephrine) devices (EpiPen® or Anapen®) are approved for use in Australia and New Zealand for the emergency treatment of anaphylaxis, the most severe form of allergic reaction.

General use adrenaline devices are additional to a patient's prescribed adrenaline device and not a substitute for prescribed devices. They are likely to be used when:

- A person who is known to be at risk of anaphylaxis does not have their own device immediately accessible, or their device is out of date.
- A second dose of adrenaline is required before an ambulance has arrived.
- A person's own device has misfired or has accidentally been discharged.
- Someone previously diagnosed with mild allergy, who was not prescribed an adrenaline device, has their first episode of anaphylaxis.
- Someone who was not previously known to be at risk has an episode of anaphylaxis for the first time (a child having their first reaction at school). In this situation it is important to check local policies to determine how to proceed.

People at risk of anaphylaxis should always be able to access their own prescribed adrenaline device.

Q 2: Where are general use adrenaline devices available?

Adrenaline devices for general use are available from pharmacies without a prescription at full price.

Q 3: How should general use adrenaline devices be stored?

Adrenaline devices (general use and prescribed devices) should be kept out of the reach of young children. They should be easily accessible when needed and not in a locked cupboard, room, or office.

A copy of the ASCIA First Aid Plan for Anaphylaxis should always be kept with an adrenaline device for general use, and in the first aid kit if that is where it is stored.

Q 4: Does ASCIA have a policy regarding when to use adrenaline devices for general use?

ASCIA does not set policies for general use adrenaline devices that are not prescribed for an individual. Institutions and businesses should consult local education and/or health authorities for policies regarding whether general use adrenaline devices can be included in first aid kits, and whether they may be administered in an emergency.

Q 5: If no general use adrenaline device is available, can I use another person's device?

The following is general advice:

- When another person's prescribed adrenaline device is used in an anaphylaxis emergency because no adrenaline device for general use is available, the institution or business should immediately replace the device for that person by purchasing the same brand of adrenaline device at a local pharmacy.
- If that same person has an episode of anaphylaxis before their adrenaline device is replaced, they should be taken immediately to hospital by ambulance. If they are not insured for the ambulance cost, this expense should be covered by the institution or business.

Q 6: Can adrenaline devices be used more than once?

No. All adrenaline devices are single use devices containing a single dose of adrenaline. They can only be used once and should be replaced immediately after use or just before the device has expired.

Q 7: Are there any side effects from adrenaline?

- Side effects of adrenaline include increased heart rate, trembling and paleness. These side effects are common however, they are only temporary.
- There are no published reports of death or serious injury resulting from use of adrenaline devices. No serious or permanent harm is likely to occur from mistakenly administering an adrenaline device, to someone who is not experiencing anaphylaxis.

Q 8: Is special training needed to give someone an adrenaline device?

No. Adrenaline devices are designed so that a person without any medical training can give adrenaline in an anaphylaxis emergency. Give an adrenaline device as shown on the ASCIA First Aid Plan for Anaphylaxis or on the device label.

There are no situations where adrenaline should not be given to treat the person who is having anaphylaxis. If in doubt, give adrenaline.

ASCIA anaphylaxis training courses have been developed to enable anyone, including people in the community, to learn how to recognise and treat anaphylaxis in an emergency:

- ASCIA anaphylaxis e-training for schools, children's education/care (CEC) and community <https://training.ascia.org.au/>
- ASCIA anaphylaxis and allergy e-training for health professionals <https://traininghp.ascia.org.au/>
- ASCIA anaphylaxis training refresher video <https://www.allergy.org.au/ascia-videos>

© ASCIA 2025

Content updated February 2025

For more information go to www.allergy.org.au/patients/about-allergy

To support allergy and immunology research go to www.allergyimmunology.org.au/donate