

## Using the EpiPen

Your child has been prescribed an EpiPen. An EpiPen is an automatic syringe for single use, filled with adrenaline. The EpiPen is used in an anaphylactic reaction. This is an acute life-threatening allergic reaction to, for example, peanuts, nuts, medicines or insect stings or bites.

## When to use the EpiPen?

In case of a severe allergic (anaphylactic) reaction such as swelling of the lips, tongue, eyes, acute tightness of the chest, coughing, vomiting or loss of consciousness, administer the EpiPen immediately! In case of a minor reaction, such as itching and redness of the skin, we advise you to wait and possibly give your child an antihistamine (liquid or tablet), which can also be prescribed for your child. If you are unsure, it is best to take your child to a doctor or the hospital emergency department as a precaution and wait for the reaction to run its course.

The active medication in the emergency pen is adrenaline. This is an endogenous substance that is normally released in acute stress situations, such as a severe shock or exercise. The adrenaline increases blood pressure, accelerates the heart rate and widens the airways. If you have 'mistakenly' used the emergency pen, i.e. if there is no anaphylactic reaction, this is usually not a problem, possibly resulting in heart palpitations for several minutes or headaches, similar to a shock reaction.

## How to use the EpiPen?

1. Grasp the EpiPen firmly in one hand, with your thumb nearest the blue safety cap.
2. Pull off the blue safety cap from the EpiPen.
3. Jab the orange tip of the EpiPen in one movement at a right angle into the thigh. This can be done through any clothing. You will hear and feel a click.
4. Hold the EpiPen in place for 10 seconds, then remove the EpiPen at a right angle from the thigh. When you remove the EpiPen, the needle cover will automatically close over the needle.
5. Massage the injection site for 10 seconds.
6. Seek medical attention immediately: call 112 and state 'anaphylaxis'.

Please note the following:

- It is important that the person who needs the EpiPen always carries the EpiPen with him or her.
- Make a note of the EpiPen's expiry date in your calendar. Make sure that before that date, you have a new EpiPen at home. You can also register on [www.epipen.nl](http://www.epipen.nl). You will then receive an email or SMS from us before the shelf life expires.
- Check the clarity of the fluid through the viewing window. The viewing window turns dark after use. Keep the EpiPen in the pouch and case provided. The EpiPen is sensitive to light and air.
- The EpiPen should preferably be stored at room temperature and certainly not in extreme cold or heat.
- There are two types of EpiPen. EpiPen Junior 0.15 mg for children between 10-25 kilograms and an EpiPen 0.30 mg for persons over 25 kilograms. Please pay attention to this.

- The EpiPen is for single use only. As soon as the pen has been used, the EpiPen must be replaced. If you have used the EpiPen, always call 112. The adrenaline in the EpiPen works for about 20-30 minutes. Your child may need a second EpiPen. The ambulance staff can then decide whether a second EpiPen should be administered. For this reason, your doctor will give you a prescription for several EpiPens.

During the consultation at the outpatients' clinic, you will practise together with the doctor using an EpiPen Trainer. This is a practice pen that does not contain a needle or adrenaline. If you wish, you can also order the trainer via [www.epipen.nl](http://www.epipen.nl). This will allow you to practise on your own as well as allowing you to coach other people, such as grandparents, teachers, group leaders or sports clubs.

You can also watch the instruction video to get some good instructions.

## **Flying**

Airlines often require a doctor's certificate to take an EpiPen on board a flight. Check the rules of the airline well in advance before flying. If necessary, the paediatrician can arrange a customs declaration for you.

## **More information and questions**

The Nederlands Anafylaxis Netwerk, which provides support to allergy sufferers, can provide you with more information. For example, they have a manual that describes how to provide information to places of education or the workplace.

## **Information**

Stichting het Nederlands Anafylaxis Netwerk  
Oranjelaan 91, 3311 DJ Dordrecht  
Monday to Friday 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.  
Tel: 078-6390356 or email [support@anafylaxis.nl](mailto:support@anafylaxis.nl)

For more information, please click on [www.nvva-allergologie.nl/patient](http://www.nvva-allergologie.nl/patient)

## **Do you have any questions?**

Please contact the paediatrics outpatient clinic of Hospital Amstelland via telephone number 020 - 755 7028. In the evenings and at night you can call the general practitioner.