

# Family Education Sheet

## How to Use an Epinephrine Auto-Injector for Anaphylaxis



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Patient and Family Education  
www.childrenshospital.org

### Key points to remember:

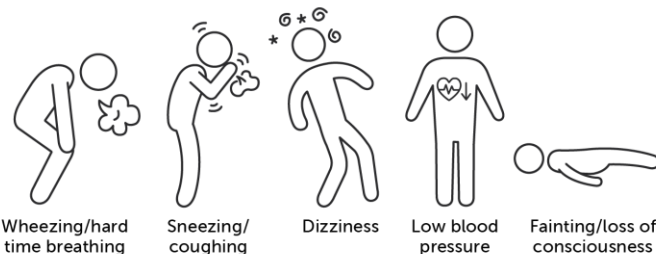
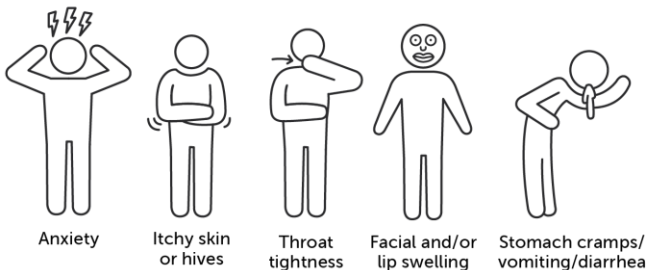
- **Make sure you know how to use your child's epinephrine auto-injector** so you are prepared in an emergency. Talk to your child's allergist or allergy nurse if you have questions about how to use your auto-injector.
- **If your child has symptoms of anaphylaxis, use the epinephrine auto-injector and call 911 right away.**

### What is anaphylaxis?

- Anaphylaxis is a very bad allergic reaction that can affect the whole body. **It is a medical emergency.**
- Anaphylaxis can happen a few seconds to a few hours after being exposed to the allergen (the substance that causes the reaction).
  - This allergic reaction most often happens within the first 30 minutes after being exposed to the allergen.
- Anaphylaxis can be very serious and sometimes deadly.
- Ask your allergist for a written emergency action plan.
- If possible, staying away from the allergen is best.
- Wearing a medic alert bracelet is also a good idea.

### What are the symptoms?

Symptoms may include:



**If your child has symptoms of anaphylaxis, use the epinephrine auto-injector and call 911 right away.**

### What is an epinephrine auto-injector?

- An epinephrine auto-injector is a device that gives 1 dose of epinephrine, also called adrenaline.
- It is important to talk with your health care provider about when to use it.

### What should I know about using epinephrine auto-injectors?

- Keep enough epinephrine auto-injectors with you so there are always at least 2 with you or your child.
- Do not keep the epinephrine auto-injector in places where it is very hot or cold, like a car or glove compartment. It may cause the device to not work.

### What is the medication in the auto-injector?

The medicine is called epinephrine. It works quickly to reverse symptoms of anaphylaxis/allergic reaction. It increases the heart rate and blood pressure, makes breathing easier and reduces the swelling around the lips, face and airway. Side effects may include:

- Fast/fluttery heartbeat, sweating, anxiety
- Dizziness
- Headache

### Contact us

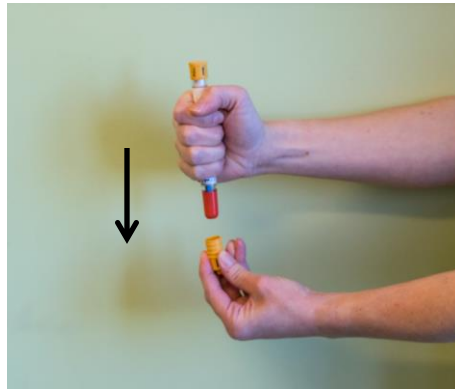
- **Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.:** Call the Allergy Program at 617-355-6117.
- **After 4:30 p.m., on weekends and holidays:** Call 617-355-6369 to speak with the allergist on call.

*This Family Education Sheet is available in Arabic and Spanish*

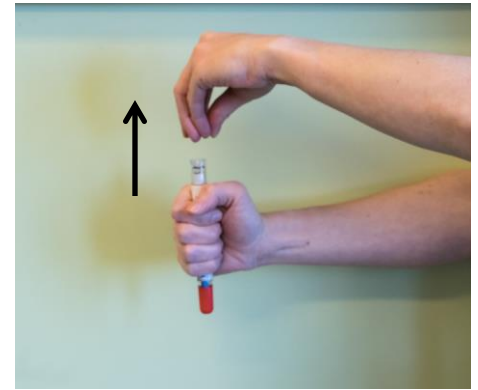
## How do I use the auto-injector?



- 1 Remove the auto-injector from carrying case.



- 2 Pull off the safety cover from the bottom end of the injector.



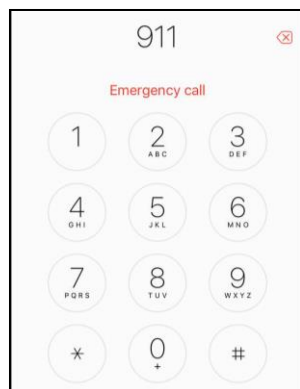
- 3 Then pull off the safety cover from the top end of the injector.



- 4 Hold the auto-injector in your hand with the red end facing downward.



- 5 Place against outer middle thigh and push the red end into thigh. **Hold in place for 10 seconds.**



- 6 Call 911.



- 7 Use 2<sup>nd</sup> auto-injector if symptoms are not better within 5 minutes.