



# NORTH TEXAS ALLERGY & ASTHMA ASSOCIATES

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## **ADRENALIN INJECTION (EPI-PEN)**

### **How does the Epi-Pen Auto-injector work?**

The EpiPen® is simple to use and the absence of a visible needle helps to minimize fear and resistance to self-injection. Activate the EpiPen® by removing the gray safety cap. Jab the EpiPen® with the black tip against the thigh and hold for twenty (20) seconds. This releases a spring activated plunger, pushing the concealed needle into the thigh muscle and expelling a dose of epinephrine.

### **Where should the EpiPen® be placed for injection?**

The EpiPen® should simply be jabbed against the fleshy outer portion of the thigh. There is no need for more precise placement. DO NOT attempt injection of adrenaline into a vein or into the buttocks.

### **What will I feel when I use an EpiPen® Auto-Injector?**

The injection itself is actually quite painless. Upon removing the EpiPen® after injection, you will see a short needle protruding. In most instances, the beneficial effects of the drug will be felt within seconds. The most common changes you may feel are a more rapid heart beat and a slight nervousness, "like a shot of adrenalin". Even though a residual amount of material remains within an EpiPen® after use, the unit cannot be used again and should be properly discarded.

### **Can the EpiPen® Auto-Injector be used through clothing?**

Yes, if necessary. The preferred method is to remove your clothing from the site of injection. However if this is too difficult or awkward, or if there is no time, the EpiPen® may be used directly through your clothing.

### **Does the EpiPen® Auto-Injector come in different strengths?**

Yes, EpiPen® Auto-Injectors come in two strengths: 0.3mg (Yellow label) for adults (EpiPen®), and 0.15mg (White label) for young children (EpiPen® Jr.). Both strengths deliver a single dose.

### **Are there any special tips or precautions I should know?**

The EpiPen® Auto-Injector is quite durable, but like any instrument it can be damaged if mishandled. Remove the gray safety cap only when you are ready to use the EpiPen®, otherwise the unit could be activated prematurely. Never put your fingers over the black tip when removing the safety cap, or after the safety cap has been removed. Epinephrine is stable at room temperature until the marked expiration date. EpiPen® should not be refrigerated as refrigeration for extended periods may cause the unit to malfunction. Neither should the EpiPen® Auto-Injector be exposed to extreme heat, such as in the glove compartment or trunk of a car during the summer. Do not expose your auto-injector to direct sunlight; light and heat can cause epinephrine to oxidize and go bad, turning it brown. Check contents of the glass cartridge in the EpiPen® periodically through the viewing window of the unit to make sure the solution is clear and colorless. If the solution appears brown, replace the unit immediately. Always replace your EpiPen® with a fresh unit prior to the expiration date.

### **After using an EpiPen® Auto-Injector, what else must I do?**

The EpiPen® Auto-Injector is intended for emergency use only. After use, you should get further medical help immediately. At the same time, try to keep warm and avoid unnecessary exertion. The effects of the injection begin to wear off after 10 to 20 minutes; therefore it is important that you should seek further medical assistance. Make certain you tell the health professionals who will treat you that you have given yourself an injection of epinephrine.

### **How Do I Dispose Of An Epi-Pen® Auto-Injector?**

Do not throw the EpiPen® auto-injector away after use. Bend the needle back against a hard surface and carefully reinsert it, needle first, into the container. Go immediately to the nearest hospital emergency room and bring along the used EpiPen.