

Safety Alert No. 67

Changes to EpiPen® Instructions



To:

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS
DIRECTORS, PUBLIC SCHOLS NSW
DIRECTORS, EDUCATIONAL SERVICES
PRINCIPALS
WHS MANAGERS
WHS CONSULTANTS**

There have been some recent changes regarding the administration of EpiPens® which all staff need to be aware of.

Changes to Labelling of the EpiPen® adrenaline autoinjector

As of 13 June 2017, the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) announced that the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) approved changes to the labelling of the EpiPen® adrenaline autoinjectors.

The devices have not changed, just the instructions on the label, which now include:

- Reduced injection time from 10 to 3 seconds – this is based on research confirming efficacy and delivery of adrenaline through the 3 second delivery.
- Removal of the massage step after the injection – this step is no longer required and has been found to reduce the risk of tissue irritation.

All EpiPen® adrenaline autoinjectors should now be held in place for 3 seconds, regardless of the instructions on the label. However, if they are held for 10 seconds it will not affect the way that the adrenaline works.

EpiPen® adrenaline autoinjectors with a 10 second label can continue to be used and **should not be** replaced unless they have been used, are just about to expire or have expired.

The new label EpiPen® and EpiPen® Jr adrenaline (epinephrine) autoinjectors are now available from pharmacies in Australia and New Zealand.

A short video is available on the [ASCIA](#) website clearly outlining the changes.

Changes to ASCIA Action Plans for Anaphylaxis

ASCIA Action Plans for Anaphylaxis have been updated to reflect these changes.

Updated ASCIA Action Plans for Anaphylaxis (General) - Orange are now available on the [ASCIA](#) website. Schools are reminded to replace all of their ASCIA Action Plans for Anaphylaxis (General) - Orange stored alongside their first aid kit(s) which include a general use adrenaline autoinjector(s).

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ASCIA Action Plans for Anaphylaxis (personal) – Red **will not** need to be replaced until the student's prescribed (personal) EpiPen® adrenaline autoinjector is replaced through their GP due to use or expiry.

Support Available

The Health & Safety Directorate understands that it can be difficult for principals to obtain current medical information. This includes updated ASCIA action plans signed by the student's general practitioner to support schools in completing Individual Health Care Plans, as well as a current adrenaline autoinjector prescribed for the student for use in an emergency situation, that are either kept in a central location within the school or carried with the student at all times, depending on the age of the student.

Principals are reminded that additional advice and support is available to all schools and workplaces on the management of anaphylaxis through the NSW Anaphylaxis Education Program (NSWAEP) based at the Children's Hospital Westmead. The NSWAEP work in partnership with the department and can assist with:

- Complex situations such as being unable to gain medication from parent(s) and liaising between schools, parents and GP's (where appropriate);
- Managing student food allergies and the appropriate risk management strategies that can be put in place;
- Supporting schools in completing Individual Health Care Plans;
- Liaising between schools and parents to assist in finding appropriate health care professionals, referrals and support; and
- Dedicated support and debrief in the event of an anaphylactic incident at the school.

The NSWAEP can be contacted on (02) 9845 3483 or by email at SCHN-Anaphylaxis@health.nsw.gov.au.

Schools and workplaces are reminded of the importance of staying informed about the latest EpiPen® administration advice to maintain the highest level of safety and preparedness in the case of an anaphylactic emergency.

The department's [online Anaphylaxis e-learning module](#) and [support resources](#) will be updated prior to Term 3 to reflect this new advice. Staff are not required to complete the updated training until their current certification expires.

For further information on the services available, please contact your local Work Health and Safety (WHS) Consultant. Alternatively please call the department's Incident Report and Support Hotline on 1800 811 523 (select option 6).

Marnie O'Brien
Executive Director, Health and Safety
29 June 2017