

# LIFE THREATENING ALLERGIES and HOW TO USE THE EPI PEN

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## LIFE THREATENING ALLERGIES

Five percent of students may have a potentially life threatening allergy. Common allergens include: medications (i.e. penicillin, sulfa), foods such as peanuts / tree nuts (cashews, pecans, and walnuts), milk, egg, wheat, soy, fish and shellfish. In addition to food allergies, bee and wasp stings are responsible for the deaths of 58 persons yearly in the United States.



## PREVENTION

Prevention begins with being pro-active and recognizing which students have serious allergies. Know which student is allergic to what foods, insects, or medications. If you have a child with food allergies, notify all parents that birthdays should be celebrated with non-food treats, e.g. books, songs, photos.



## SIGNS OF ANAPHYLAXIS

All of us develop swelling, redness, and pain at the site of a bee sting. Anaphylaxis is the over-reaction of the body to an allergen. Signs of anaphylaxis may include:

- LUNGS: difficulty breathing, shortness of breath
- SKIN: hives or rash
- CARDIAC: pale, weak pulse, confusion
- MOUTH: swelling of face or lips
- GUT: vomiting, abdominal pain

Children with a history of asthma are at increased risk of serious allergic reaction.



Hives may be present in anaphylaxis. Notify the nurse and carefully monitor student's breathing.

If the child is experiencing difficulty breathing, has a weak pulse, or is not responsive, **call 911**.

## HOW TO USE the EPI PEN

Epinephrine is a naturally occurring hormone also known as the “fight or flight” hormone released by the adrenal gland during times of stress. The Epi-Pen (adult) contains 0.3 mL of Epinephrine and the Epi Pen Jr. contains 0.15 mL.

STEP 1—notify the school nurse or 911

STEP 2—say , “You are having an allergic reaction. I am going to give you a shot of epinephrine. It is important that you remain calm and do not move your leg.”

STEP 3—Administer the Epinephrine

- Remove the Epi Pen from its plastic container
- Remove the BLUE safety cap and place your thumb over this end “BLUE to the sky; ORANGE to the thigh.”
- Place your LEFT hand on the student’s thigh to stabilize it
- Hold the Epi Pen in your RIGHT HAND and extend your arm. Using a swinging motion, inject the epinephrine into the anterior thigh muscle.
- HOLD the EpiPen against the thigh and count to 5
- Remove the EpiPen and replace it in container; discard the Epi Pen
- Monitor the patient. He or she may require a second dose of epinephrine.



Remove blue safety cap. Place your thumb on this side of the Epi Pen.



Extend your arm and administer the Epi into the anterior thigh muscle. Count to 5 before removing. Call nurse or 911.

## RESOURCES

Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network [faan@foodallergy.org]

www2.aap.org/sections/allergy/allergy\_guidelines\_final\_1.pdf [American Academy of Pediatrics]

Sicherer SH, Mahr TA; Management of Food Allergy in the School Setting. Pediatrics 2010; Dec; 126(6):1232-1239.

When and How to use the Epi-Pen: [www.epipen.com](http://www.epipen.com)