



# Services for Young Children

Update 22.10.18: EpiPen and EpiPen Junior shortage, urgent advice for early years settings

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**Please ensure you and all relevant staff at your setting are made aware of the following information.**

The Department of Health and Social Care have issued urgent advice regarding a supply issue affecting EpiPen and EpiPen Junior.

This is expected to continue for the remainder of 2018. EpiPen is an adrenaline auto-injector device used in emergencies to treat very serious allergic reactions to insect stings/bites, foods, drugs or other substances.

**The shortage may mean some children start using a different adrenaline auto-injector that providers are less familiar with and/or carrying fewer devices than normal.**

**Below is some information drawn up by NHS allergy experts that is useful for you to familiarise yourself with.**

In the event that a person experiences an onset of symptoms of anaphylaxis, the advice for management remains the same:

1. The person's own adrenaline auto-injector device should be administered immediately.
2. Staff should then immediately call an ambulance or send someone to do this. Whoever makes the call needs to say this is an emergency case of anaphylaxis.
3. A second auto-injector device should be administered after 5 minutes if the person is not improving.

## Alternative devices

- You should also note that during this time it is possible that some individuals may need to switch from their usual device to other alternative adrenaline auto-injector devices that may be more readily available
- In the UK there are two alternative adrenaline auto-injector devices available, Emerade and Jext. Both companies manufacture the adult and paediatric presentations of adrenaline auto-injectors
- You will likely already be aware that the different brands of adrenaline auto-injectors are not used in exactly the same way. During this time, we would encourage you to ensure you are familiar with the different devices and how to administer them
- Guidance on how to use different devices is available via the following link:  
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/anaphylaxis/treatment/> .

## Expiry dates and use beyond expiry for adrenaline auto-injector devices

- It may also be useful to be aware that the expiry dates on adrenaline auto-injector devices apply until the final day of the month shown on the packaging. e.g. a device labelled 'April 2019' does not expire until the 30th of April 2019
- Furthermore, recently it has been approved that certain batches of adult EpiPen 0.3mg auto-injectors (children over 30kg can be prescribed adult 0.3mg auto-injectors) can be safely used for four months after the expiry date has passed – further information about these batches is available on the EpiPen website <http://www.ep-ipen.co.uk/> or via healthcare professionals
- The extension of use beyond the labelled expiry date only applies to those batches of EpiPen specified on the EpiPen website. **For other EpiPens, not covered by the batch numbers on the EpiPen website, including all EpiPen Junior devices, the expiry date labelled on the EpiPen should continue to be adhered to**
- You might also find it helpful to know that children weighing above 30kg can be prescribed 0.3mg devices in line with existing established guidance. During the current shortage, prescribers have been reminded that it is particularly important to conform to this existing guidance to preserve the limited supplies of 0.15mg devices (junior devices) for smaller children, particularly as there is currently greater availability of the adult devices. Therefore, some children might be switched to higher doses of adrenaline auto-injectors, which are more readily available.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) recently issued guidance for healthcare professionals about the supply issue, link to guidance can be found below:

[https://www.cas.mhra.gov.uk/ViewandAcknowledgment/ViewAttachment.aspx?Attachment\\_id=103102](https://www.cas.mhra.gov.uk/ViewandAcknowledgment/ViewAttachment.aspx?Attachment_id=103102).

This provides supply and clinical management advice.

### Urgent update – please read

The guidance from children's allergy experts is **now subject to the following updates:**

- During this period of reduced supply, 300mcg of adrenaline can be prescribed to children weighing 25kg or above, even where the pen might state 30kg or above; and
- In the event of anaphylaxis during this shortage period, if a child has no in-date pen, an out of date pen can be used. Using an out-of-date pen might give a lower dose of adrenaline but it is better to use an out of date pen than wait for an ambulance to arrive.