It can be terrifying to suddenly find a child short of breath or breaking into a rash after eating a certain food or being stung or bitten by an insect. The more you know about an allergic emergency, the better prepared you'll be.

A care recipient who may require an EpiPen in an emergency situation falls within the protections of the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), and we are required by law to provide a reasonable accommodation when care is requested.

The particular need will be identified as part of our family meeting procedure, and permission to administer the EpiPen in an emergency situation will be obtained verbally. The local CNT office/caregivers will have a one-page instruction sheet on the use of an EpiPen and the parent will to show the caregiver where the kit is kept when he/she arrives at the home.

EpiPens are simple to use and do not require a medical professional to perform/dispense. Anyone can do it, with minimal training. It is often included in basic emergency training. There is no measuring out of medication, dispensation, needles, or similar considerations.

EpiPens are to be used in response to an emergency situation. The use of the EpiPen during care although possible, is not likely. This is different from managing an ongoing medical condition which requires the dispensation of medication, or a person who is actively sick when care is requested.

**When is an EpiPen needed?**

**Severe Allergies and Anaphylaxis**

**What is an allergic emergency (anaphylaxis)?**

An allergic emergency, medically defined as anaphylaxis, is a severe allergic reaction that can occur quickly (as fast as within a couple of minutes) and may be life-threatening. An allergic emergency can be caused by a number of triggers, including certain foods, stinging and biting insects, medications, and latex.

**What are the symptoms of an allergic emergency?**

Symptoms of an allergic emergency vary, but those involving the skin (hives, itching, and skin redness) are most common. A majority of cases also involve swelling of the lips and tongue as well as the airways (tightness in the throat, shortness of breath). Fewer reactions involve the gastrointestinal system (nausea, stomach pain, vomiting, diarrhea), the cardiovascular system (fast heartbeat, chest pain, low blood pressure), or the central nervous system (headache, confusion).

**Who may be at risk for an allergic emergency?**

Anyone can develop a severe allergy at any time in life, but certain factors may make some individuals susceptible to having an allergic emergency. These factors can be divided into two categories:

1) General factors that increase the risk of having a severe allergic emergency including:

- Exposure to certain allergens (triggers) such as food (peanuts, tree nuts, fish, shellfish, eggs, and milk), stinging or biting insects (bees, ants, and ticks), latex, and medications (penicillin) for those who are allergic.
• Age: Adolescents and young adults are at an increased risk of having a severe allergic emergency because of inconsistent behaviors in avoiding known triggers and carrying an EpiPen.

It’s important that those at risk for an allergic emergency avoid known allergy-causing triggers and always carry an EpiPen Auto-Injector.

Remember that if the right precautions are taken, an allergic emergency may be preventable.

**What foods typically cause allergic emergencies?**
About 4% of Americans have some type of food allergy, but not everyone will have an allergic emergency. Peanuts, tree nuts (such as walnuts and pecans), seafood, cow’s milk, and eggs account for the majority of allergic emergencies in young children, while seafood accounts for the vast majority of allergic emergencies in adults.

**The EpiPen Auto-Injector**

**How should the EpiPen Auto-Injector be used?**
Once you’re familiar with the EpiPen Auto-Injector, giving yourself or someone in your care an epinephrine injection is really quite simple — and it can help save a life. Here’s what you need to do:

1. Pull off blue safety release cap.
2. Swing and firmly push orange tip against outer thigh so it ‘clicks.’ HOLD on thigh approximately 10 seconds to deliver drug.
3. Seek immediate medical attention by calling 911 and going to the closest medical facility. Take the used EpiPen Auto-Injector(s) with you to hospital emergency department.

To watch the EpiPen How-to-Use video, please click here.

**Where’s the best place to keep the EpiPen Auto-Injector?**
You should take your EpiPen Auto-Injector everywhere you go, but it should be kept at room temperature (25°C, 77°F) until the marked expiration date, when it should be replaced. The effectiveness of this drug may decrease after the expiration date therefore care should be taken to promptly refill the prescription before the expiration date. Your EpiPen Auto-Injector should not be refrigerated or exposed to extreme heat or light.

**How does epinephrine work?**
The drug product in the EpiPen Auto-Injector is epinephrine. Epinephrine by injection is the treatment of choice for allergic emergencies (anaphylactic reactions) because it quickly begins working to reverse symptoms of an allergic emergency. It constricts blood vessels to increase blood pressure, relaxes smooth muscles in the lungs to reduce wheezing to improve breathing, stimulates the heart (increases heart rate), and works to reduce hives and swelling that may occur around the face and lips.
**Is one dose of epinephrine always enough?**
Approximately 20% of patients who receive an initial dose of epinephrine for treatment of allergic emergencies may require a second dose. Therefore, it is important that patients at risk for allergic emergencies carry two doses of epinephrine. More than two doses of EpiPen Auto-Injector should only be administered under direct medical supervision. Make sure you speak with your health care professional about how to identify the signs and symptoms of an allergic emergency. If you, your child or someone you’re caring for shows signs or symptoms of an allergic emergency inject the health care professional-prescribed EpiPen immediately, then promptly call 911 and seek immediate medical attention. Take the used EpiPen Auto-Injector with you to the emergency room.

**Is the EpiPen Auto-Injector carrier tube waterproof?**
No. The carrier tube has no rubber seal, so it’s not waterproof.
1. Pull off the blue safety release cap.

2. Swing and firmly push the orange tip against the outer thigh so it ‘clicks.’ HOLD on thigh for approximately 10 seconds to deliver the drug.

   Please note: As soon as you release pressure from the thigh, the protective cover will extend.

   Each EpiPen Auto-Injector contains a single dose of a medicine called epinephrine, which you inject into your outer thigh. DO NOT INJECT INTRAVENTRICULAR, DO NOT INJECT INTO YOUR BUTTOCK, as this may not be effective for a severe allergic reaction. In case of accidental injection, please seek immediate medical treatment.

3. Call 911

   Seek immediate emergency medical attention and be sure to take the EpiPen Auto-Injector with you to the emergency room.

To view an instructional video demonstrating how to use an EpiPen Auto-Injector, please visit epipen.com.