

2 June 2022

Dear stakeholder,

RE: Adrenaline injector devices in schools

We are jointly writing to you to inform you of the very concerning issue that is occurring in some schools in Australia. As you may be aware, there are now two adrenaline injector devices available in Australia – Anapen® and EpiPen®. Anapen® was approved by the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA) and listed on the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme (PBS), in September 2021 and free online anaphylaxis e-training for schools was updated at the same time.

Both Anapen® and EpiPen® devices contain a single fixed dose of adrenaline, are safe and effective for the treatment of anaphylaxis and are easy to use.

Some parents are being told that the school will not accept an Anapen® adrenaline injector for their child. This is extremely concerning for the following reasons:

- The decision regarding which adrenaline injector device is prescribed for a child (or adult) is made by the prescribing doctor in consultation with the parent/patient. It is a patient safety issue for a school to refuse to accept an Anapen® device if this is the adrenaline injector device prescribed for the child (or adult). The prescribing doctor will have trained them/the family in how to use the prescribed device and provided an ASCIA Action Plan specific to that device. There may also have been a specific reason for choosing that particular brand of device.
- Anapen® is available in a 500 microgram dose and may be prescribed for school aged teens if it is the appropriate therapeutic dose. EpiPen® is not available in a 500 microgram dose and hence once again, it is a patient safety issue if a school refuses to accept an Anapen® device.
- Having a second brand of adrenaline injector device available in Australia is essential as EpiPen® supply issues have occurred numerous times in the past. Both EpiPen® and Anapen® devices are widely used in other countries and most countries have multiple brands of adrenaline injector devices available to ensure continued supply of life saving adrenaline, particularly if one brand has stock shortages. In recent years, people, (including school staff) have been encouraged to use an expired EpiPen® in an emergency. Many people who have used their adrenaline injector or been diagnosed during a shortage, have been left without life saving medication. Therefore, Australia needs to have more than one brand of device and schools cannot dictate which device a student should be prescribed.
- When we do have another shortage of either device, we will hopefully have stock of the other brand of adrenaline injectors and, importantly, knowledge in its use.

School staff have access to [free online training](#) available from the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA), the peak medical body for allergy in Australia. Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia has created [2-minute animations](#) on how to use each device.

Adrenaline injector trainer devices for both Anapen® and EpiPen® are available from Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia and schools should train staff in how to use both devices including hands-on practice with the trainer devices.

The National Allergy Strategy has created [Best Practice Guidelines](#) for schools that speak to both adrenaline injector brands.

We encourage you to share the information above and provide guidance to your member schools informing them that they cannot refuse an Anapen® device prescribed to a child or adult.

Please feel welcome to contact Sandra Vale, National Allergy Strategy Manager, should you require further information.

Kind regards,



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Co-chair
National Allergy Strategy



Ms Maria Said
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Dr Katie Frith
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