

Fact Sheet

Anapen® Use



What is an Anapen®?

Anapen® is an emergency device that can inject adrenaline. It is used to treat severe allergic reactions (anaphylaxis). Adrenaline, (a naturally occurring hormone) reverses the severe allergic reaction and can be lifesaving.

Should my child have an Anapen®?

All allergists agree that children who have had a serious allergic reaction with involvement of the breathing passages should have an Anapen® or other adrenaline auto injector if there is the possibility that re-exposure to the allergen can occur. The need for other children to have an Anapen® depends on a number of factors which should be discussed with your doctor. If you have an Anapen® it is very important that you understand how to use it and that you have a written ASCIA action plan for anaphylaxis provided by your doctor.

What is an Anaphylaxis action plan?

An ASCIA action plan for anaphylaxis describes what to do if your child has an allergic reaction and when to give the Anapen®

Australian allergists have designed an action plan for use throughout Australia. A copy of this Action plan can be found at www.allergy.org.au. **If you have an Anapen® you must also have an action plan for anaphylaxis such as the ASCIA action plan signed by your doctor. This plan should be kept up to date.**

When should I use the Anapen®?

The ASCIA action plan for anaphylaxis tells you when you should give the

Anapen®. If your child develops an allergic reaction with any one of the following symptoms you should use the Anapen®;

- Difficulty/noisy breathing
- Swelling of tongue
- Swelling/tightness in throat
- Difficulty talking and/or hoarse voice
- Wheeze
- Persistent cough

Note an important feature of all of these symptoms is that they involve the breathing passages.

The Anapen® should be used if collapse or loss of consciousness develops in an allergic reaction.

Young preschool age children may become pale and floppy without other symptoms and in this case the Anapen® should be used.

If you are in doubt it is better and safer to use the Anapen® unnecessarily rather than not treat a serious reaction.

What is an Anapen® trainer?

An Anapen® Trainer is a device that looks like an Anapen® but which does not have a needle or contain medicine. It is used for practice in giving the Anapen®.

Which end contains the needle?

It is very important that you remember that the **black tip contains the needle. You need to remove the black needle shield as outlined below.**

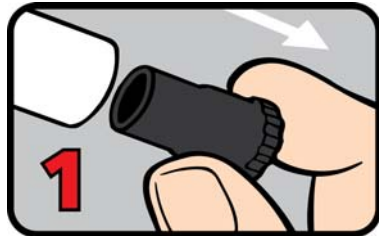
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How do I use the Anapen®?

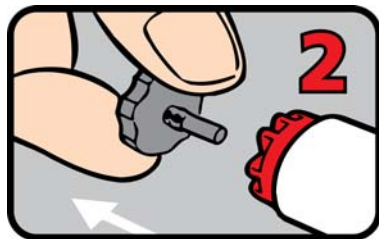
There are 4 main steps.

1. PULL OFF BLACK NEEDLE SHIELD



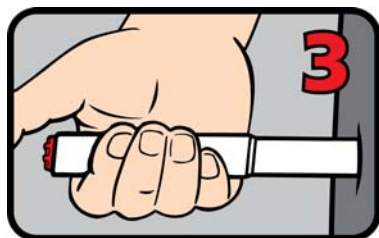
PULL OFF BLACK NEEDLE SHIELD.

2. PULL OFF GREY SAFETY CAP from red button.



PULL OFF GREY SAFETY CAP from red button.

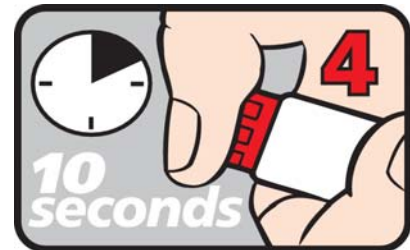
3. PLACE NEEDLE END FIRMLY against outer mid-thigh at 90 degree angle (With or without clothing).



PLACE NEEDLE END FIRMLY against outer mid-thigh at 90° angle (with or without clothing).

4. PRESS RED BUTTON so it clicks and hold for 10 seconds.

REMOVE Anapen and DO NOT touch needle. Massage injection site for 10 seconds.



PRESS RED BUTTON SO IT CLICKS AND HOLD FOR 10 SECONDS

The needle does not retract completely and may cause a needle stick injury. The used Anapen may be placed in a suitable plastic container.

What should I do after giving the Anapen®?

You should always call an ambulance even if the Anapen® relieves symptoms. Your action plan for anaphylaxis provides the phone number. When an Anapen® has been used the patient should remain under medical observation for at least 4-6 hours after the symptoms have resolved.

Is a further dose of adrenaline ever necessary?

A single Anapen® is all that is required to treat an anaphylactic reaction in the majority of cases. If there is no response to the initial dose of adrenaline, the Anapen® dose can be repeated (if available) after 5 minutes.



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What should I do if the symptoms look like Asthma?

If you are not sure if the symptoms your child is experiencing are due to allergy or asthma and you feel they may have been exposed to an allergen, then the safest and best course of action is to give the Anapen®. The adrenaline in the Anapen® will treat asthma or anaphylaxis and is safe to give. You can use a bronchodilator eg Ventolin after you use the Anapen®.

Can I use other medicines (antihistamines, cortisone) instead of the Anapen® to treat a severe allergic reaction?

No. If symptoms indicating a severe allergic reaction develop you should not rely on these other medications to treat the reaction.

Are there side effects from using an Anapen®?

It is very rare for children to suffer any serious side effects from administration of Anapen®. The Anapen® contains adrenaline which is a naturally occurring hormone. The skin around the injection site often becomes quite pale for a short period of time after the Anapen® is given. Other symptoms which may occur in some cases are tremor, anxiety, palpitations, headache and nausea. These symptoms only last for a short time and are not serious.

What strength Anapen® should I have?

Australian allergists have recommended Anapen® Jr for children between 10 and

20 kg and Anapen® for anyone over 20 kg. An Anapen® Jr is not usually recommended for children less than 10 kg. Most children weigh 20 Kg before they turn 6 and school age children usually need the full strength Anapen.

Who can prescribe an Anapen®?

The first authority prescription needs to be given by an allergy specialist, emergency specialist or a paediatrician. Your family doctor can initiate treatment with an Anapen® or can order a repeat prescription if he/she has information from a specialist indicating that the Anapen® is necessary.

How many Anapens® can I get?

The current Authority Scheme in Australia allows for provision of two Anapens® at a time for both adults and children (one for school/work/place of study and one at home or with the allergic person). An older child who is travelling to and from school independently should always carry the second Anapen® on their person.

What should I do if the Anapen® is expired?

You should replace it with one that is not expired but keep the expired device until then.

If your child needs to use the Anapen® and you only have an expired Anapen® use the expired Anapen® as this may still work but not as effectively as an Anapen® within its use by date. In an emergency it is much better to use an expired Anapen® than no Anapen® at all.

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The shelf life of the Anapen® is normally 12-18 months from the date of manufacture. The expiry date should be marked on a calendar and the Anapen® replaced prior to this date.

Should the Anapen® go everywhere with my child?

Yes. Most reactions occur outside the home or school. Food allergy reactions often occur in restaurants. You should have the Anapen® with you whenever you take your child out. When your child becomes old enough to go out alone he/she should carry the Anapen® and know how and when it should be used.

If my child has an Anapen® will they need it for the rest of their life?

Not necessarily. In some cases children can outgrow their allergy or in the case of stinging insect allergy, the allergy may be successfully treated by desensitisation and eventually an Anapen® may not need to be carried.

How should I store the Anapen®?

Ideally the Anapen® should be stored in a cool place at room temperature - but **NOT** refrigerated. It is important that you keep the Anapen® in a place where it is readily available if you need to use it.

Where can I find more information on the Internet?

- The Australian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCI) website contains useful information on Anapen® use written by Australian specialists (www.allergy.org.au). It also contains a comprehensive on line education program which can be accessed by any individual in particular those who may be responsible for children including parents/carer's school staff and children's services staff.
- The patient support group Anaphylaxis Australia offers updates and tips (www.allergyfacts.org.au).

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This fact sheet is for education purposes only. Please consult with your doctor or other health professional to make sure this information is right for your child.

This document was reviewed on 7th May 2010.

the children's hospital at Westmead

www.chw.edu.au

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