The Leeds Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust

Adrenaline auto-injectors care and travel

Information for patients

leeds children's hospital
caring about children

Adrenaline auto-injector

Your doctor or nurse has prescribed an adrenaline auto-injector device as part of your or your child's allergy first aid kit.

It is important that you and your family know exactly how and when to use your device.

This leaflet will give you more information on the care of your adrenaline auto-injector. You will have already had some training from the nurse in clinic.

Protect your adrenaline auto-injector

Keep the adrenaline auto-injector in a protective container. When it is exposed to light, adrenaline can deteriorate and may not work as well. **Store it out of direct sunlight.**

Do not store above 25°C. Do not put the adrenaline auto-injector in the fridge or the freezer. (**Do not leave it in a car**). When exposed to extremes of heat, adrenaline will deteriorate. **Avoid extremes of heat.**

Check the window in the auto-injector. Make sure the liquid is clear and there are no bits floating in it. Adrenaline will turn a brown colour if it has deteriorated.

Check the expiry date and re-order

The adrenaline auto-injector has an expiry date. It is very important to ensure the auto-injector is in date and has not expired.

We suggest that you -

Check that your auto-injectors are in date at the beginning of each school term and before you travel abroad.

Ask for new auto-injectors from your GP before the old ones are out of date.

Re-order all your auto injectors at the same time to make sure that they all have similar expiry date's. It makes life easier.

Remind yourself of the expiry date. Mark your calendar or go to the adrenaline auto-injectors website and click on the expiry alert icon. You will be sent an expiry reminder by letter, email or SMS (mobile) text message.

Auto-injector training device

The manufacturers of the adrenaline auto-injectors also supply an auto-injector training device. These are practice devices that look like the real thing but do not have the needle or medicine in them.

We will give you one in clinic. These trainer devices are an easy way to teach people how to give adrenaline in an emergency. Always follow the written instructions for use.

Practice

We suggest that you regularly practice with the trainer device what you would do if you or a family member were to have a serious allergic reaction. We recommend that you and your family refresh your skills on a regular basis. This could be done at the beginning of each school term.

You should be sure not only about how to use the auto-injector, but also when to use it.

Disposal of adrenaline auto-injectors

When the adrenaline auto-injectors are out of date it is important that they are safely disposed of. Do not throw them in a bin. Take them to your GP's surgery, the pharmacy or your local hospital for disposal.

Remember if you have used the adrenaline auto injector to treat an allergic reaction, take it with you to the emergency department at the hospital, where it will be safely disposed of .

If you need advice, contact the allergy clinic or book an appointment with the nurse if you need refresher training.

Please contact us if:

- You need training for a member of your immediate family or carer.
- You have had to use the adrenaline auto-injector for an allergic reaction.
- You have had an accident or a problem using the adrenaline auto-injector.
- You need advice or refresher training.

Remember - Be prepared. Carry your rescue medicines (antihistamine & adrenaline auto-injector) with you at all times!

Make sure your friends and family know what to do if you have an allergic reaction.

Travel and Holidays with an adrenaline auto-injector

Before you leave home

Before you travel, arrange travel insurance for yourself and your child. Make sure they are aware that an adrenaline auto-injector has been prescribed.

Let the airline know the type of food which you/your child is allergic to. You should be aware that other passengers may bring some of these foods onto the aircraft.

It is advisable to get a letter from your allergy consultant or GP stating that due to your food allergy you need to carry antihistamine and your adrenaline auto injectors in the carry on luggage. We are happy to supply you with a letter – please contact us at least four weeks before you travel.

Before you leave home, check that the antihistamine medicine and adrenaline auto injectors are in date for the time you are away.

Wear your medical ID bracelet or necklace to raise awareness of your allergy as it gives vital information to help others help you.

Travelling

When travelling by air or sea, carry the oral antihistamine and adrenaline auto injectors in your hand luggage, not in your suitcase.

Remember to inform security personnel at airports and ports that you are carrying lifesaving medicine in your hand luggage. It is important that they are made aware that this may be in liquid form (antihistamine) and the adrenaline auto injector contains a sharp needle.

If you have asked for a special meal, make sure the staff are aware of your needs.

Remember other travellers may be eating foods to which you/ your child is allergic to. You may prefer to take your own food for the journey.

On arrival at your holiday destination

- Tell the holiday representative and hotel chef about your/ your child's allergies
- Find out where the resident doctor and nearest hospital are located
- Know the emergency number in the country you are visiting.

Look after your adrenaline auto injectors

Insulated carrying pouches are ideal to protect the adrenaline auto-injector.

Do not leave your adrenaline auto-injectors in direct sunlight.

Try to keep the adrenaline auto-injector cool by keeping it in the middle of a bag or rucksack, and store the bag in the shade if possible.

Place the adrenaline auto-injectors in the insulated container, and keep the outside of the container cool (you can place cold bottles of water or juice around it). This will keep the adrenaline auto-injector cool but not too cold.

Do not refrigerate your adrenaline auto-injectors or place ice packs directly on or near the adrenaline auto-injector.

Avoid heat extremes, when travelling by car keep the adrenaline auto-injector in the glove box. **Do not** leave the adrenaline auto-injector in the car when you reach your destination – take it with you.

After your holiday

Check the colour of the adrenaline. If it has become discoloured (brown) – the adrenaline may no longer be effective. Have the adrenaline auto-injector replaced, even if it hasn't expired.

For any questions or concerns, please contact:

Children's Allergy Nurses

Telephone: (0113) 3920681

Email: leedsth-tr.paedallergycns@nhs.net

Webpage:
www.leedsth.nhs.uk/services/childrens-allergy-service-2/

Further Information:

Anaphylaxis UK – www.anaphylaxis.org.uk

Allergy UK – www.allergyuk.org

What did you think of your care?

Visit: www.leedsth.nhs.uk/patients/support/feedback-complaints/friends-family-test/

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Produced by: Medical Illustration Services • MID code: 20241212_003/RC

LN001041
Publication date 01/2025
Review date 01/2028