



Anaphylaxis and EpiPen

By Lisa Storie, RN

Introduction

- ▶ This training is for staff that work with a client with an epipen for allergic reactions. Use of epipen will be in the clients emergency plan.
- ▶ This training will give an overview of anaphylaxis and also steps to use the epipen. Each individual client is an unique individual and it is very important that you know under what circumstances to use the epipen. This is not something you want to try to figure out in an emergency. Please review this material and discuss with the family and your supervisor the circumstances in which you will need to use the epipen. This knowledge could save the life of your client in the event of an anaphylactic reaction.
- ▶ If after review you would like to meet with a Registered Nurse to discuss further please let your supervisor know and a meeting will be arranged.

Anaphylaxis Overview

- ▶ Anaphylaxis is a serious, life-threatening allergic reaction. The most common allergic reactions are to foods, insect sting, medications and latex.
- ▶ Typically if you come in contact with one of these substances you may have a local slight reaction but if you are allergic and come in contact then your immune system overreacts and releases chemicals which cause the allergy symptoms. These may be bothersome but usually are localized and not serious. However, some people have a much more serious reaction which usually affects more than one part of the body. This is an anaphylactic reaction.
- ▶ Anaphylaxis requires immediate medical treatment, including an injection of epinephrine and a trip to the hospital emergency room. If not treated properly, anaphylaxis can be fatal.

What is an EpiPen

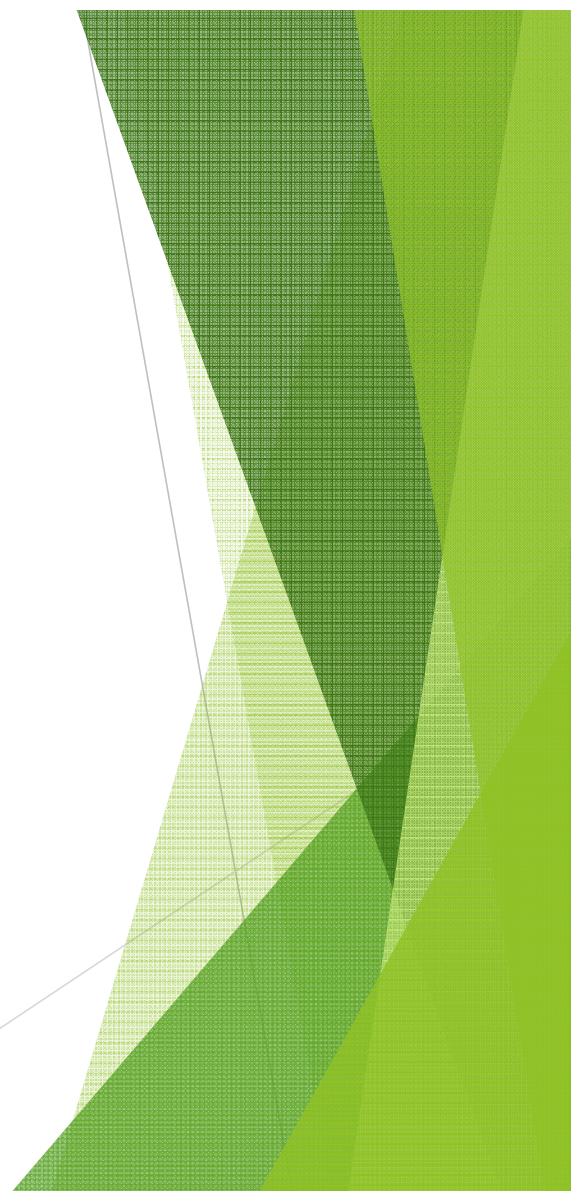
- ▶ An EpiPen is an injection of epinephrine. Epinephrine is produced by our body and is what fights off the reaction going on from the allergen. In an anaphylactic reaction our body cannot produce enough epinephrine to fight off the reaction we are experiencing. The EpiPen gives us this boost of epinephrine to help fight off what is happening within our body including swelling of the airways.
- ▶ The EpiPen does not cure the reaction but it does slow it down to allow time for Emergency Medical Services to arrive. Typically the EpiPen buys you about 20 minutes of time for EMS to arrive. EpiPens come in packs of two and if you give the first one and EMS has not arrived in 20 minutes or you start seeing signs the reaction is starting to worsen then you need to give the second EpiPen.
- ▶ Again the EpiPen does not cure the reaction it slows it down for Emergency Medical Help to arrive. The person will still need to go to ER for treatment.

How to Use Epipen

- ▶ Have someone call 911 while you give Epipen. If alone call 911 as soon as possible you may have to give epipen first depending on severity of reaction and emergency plan.
- ▶ 1. Remove the auto injector from the carrier tube. Grasp the auto injector in your fist with the orange tip pointing downward. Do not put your thumb on top of the injector. With the other hand remove the blue safety release by pulling straight up without bending or twisting it.
- ▶ 2. Have the client sit if possible and hold the auto injector with the orange tip near the outer thigh. Swing and firmly push the orange tip against the outer thigh until it “clicks”. Keep the auto injector firmly pushed against the thigh perpendicular to the thigh (straight in hold it) Hold against the thigh for approximately 10 seconds or according to package instructions to allow time for the epinephrine to auto inject
- ▶ 3. Remove the auto injector from the thigh by pulling straight out, the orange safety tip will cover the needle. Massage the injection site for 10 seconds
- ▶ Call 911 if you have not already done so and tell them you gave epipen and what time it was given. Give empty epipen to emergency personnel when they arrive. Try to keep the client as calm as possible while waiting on EMS.

Final Remarks

- ▶ Anytime you work with someone that requires epipen for allergic reactions make sure you always have it with you. Do not leave it at home or in the car. If the client has a reaction you do not have time to go find the epipen.
- ▶ If you start to give the epipen and it has recently expired and the liquid is clear then you can still use it but make sure 911 knows it is expired, you may only have 10 or 15 minutes instead of 20.
- ▶ If the medication is cloudy or discolored do not give and call 911 immediately. Tell them you do not have an usable epipen.
- ▶ Always Call 911 as soon as possible. Airway passages can close in matters of minutes which can lead to death.

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- ▶ If you have any questions please ask your immediate supervisor.
 - ▶ If you feel you need to meet with the TPS Nurse please let your supervisor know and a meeting will be arranged.
 - ▶ PLEASE PROCEED TO THE TURNING POINT TRAINING PAGE TO COMPLETE THE TEST ASSOCIATED WITH THIS TRAINING. THE LINK CAN BE FOUND AT:
 - ▶ <http://www.turningpointservicesinc.com/employee-training/>