

# Your quick guide to: Adrenaline Auto-Injectors

Adrenaline Auto-Injector devices (AAIs), also known as adrenaline pens, are prescribed to people with allergies who are at risk of having a severe allergic reaction (known as [‘anaphylaxis’](#)). Your GP or allergy doctor will ask you questions as part of their allergy focused clinical history, and determine your individual risk, based on several factors in determining whether to prescribe you with an AAI device.

If you have been prescribed an AAI, make sure you carry it with you at all times. Do not rely on someone else picking it up for you, or there being one available. Age appropriate education tailored to children on looking after their AAI is a positive way of teaching the importance of carrying your AAI’s at all times.

Your GP/Nurse or allergy doctor should discuss with you how to recognise the signs and symptoms of an allergic reaction, and how to use your AAI device. Having family, friends, teachers and colleagues that also know how and when to give you your AAI device is important, if they are with you and you are unable to do this yourself.

There are three types of AAIs available in the UK, these are called Epi-Pen and Jext. They both contain the same type of medication called ‘adrenaline’ (also referred to as ‘epinephrine’) which is given by injection, into the outer mid-thigh muscle. AAIs are prescription only medicines, and need to be prescribed by a healthcare professional –usually your GP or allergy specialist. The dose of adrenaline required is dependent on the age and weight of the person requiring the AAI device, and will be prescribed by the doctor. It is important that AAIs prescribed for children are reviewed as they get older and increase in weight to ensure they have the correct dose. Each AAI device will differ

in appearance and the availability of the dose/strength available in that particular brand.

**Key message:** Training is vital as each AAI is given differently, so it is important that you are shown how to use your AAI device. Having a trainer device is a useful tool for practicing how to use your AAI and to teach others how to use it, as this varies from brand to brand.

It is recommended that you carry two AAIs at all times, this is particularly important for people who have allergic asthma and a food allergy as they may be at an increased risk of a severe allergic reaction.<sup>1</sup>

Having an Allergy Action Plan (a written set of instructions and information specific to the individuals allergy and treatment plan) is advisable. A paediatric (child) Action Plan is available for the different types of AAI devices and also for those not requiring an AAI. These can be downloaded, printed and completed by your doctor from the following website:

<http://www.bsaci.org/about/download-paediatric-allergy-action-plans>.

The brands of AAIs available in the UK are:

AAI brand	Company
<b>Epi-Pen</b> <a href="http://www.epipen.co.uk">www.epipen.co.uk</a>	Mylan
<b>Jext</b> <a href="http://www.jext.co.uk">www.jext.co.uk</a>	ALK-ABELLO UK

## Key facts:

### Carry **two**

It is important that you carry two AAIs at all times and know how and when to use them

### **DO NOT DELAY** using your AAI

if you experience a severe reactions. Always call and ambulance if you have used your AAI.

### **A trainer device**

is useful for practicing how to use your AAI and to teach others how to use it, as this varies from brand to brand. There is no adrenaline or needle in the trainer device.

## Allergy UK Helpline

Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm:

Call: 01322 619 898

Email: [info@allergyuk.org](mailto:info@allergyuk.org)

Visit us at:

**Allergyuk.org**

# Your quick guide to: Adrenaline Auto-Injectors

## Taking care of your AAI injector:

- Store in a cool dark place at room temperature, kept out of direct sunlight and out of the way of extreme temperatures, for example do not store in a fridge, or glove box in a car on a hot day.
- Keep out of the reach of small children, but not locked away or hard to access if needed.
- All AAIs come with an expiry date. Keep them in date and set a reminder or register for an expiry alert service (offered on the manufacturers website) several weeks before it is due to expire, to make sure you have enough time to obtain a prescription for a new device.
- AAIs should not be reused and once used should be replaced as soon as possible.
- The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) advises people prescribed with an AAI that they should always carry two, in case of an emergency.

Having two AAIs is beneficial for multiple situations, including:

- If the first dose is not effective in managing symptoms, and a second dose is required.
- The AAI is administered accidentally (there have been cases where the person providing first aid has accidentally injected themselves, resulting in the person having an anaphylactic reaction not getting the adrenaline).
- Where there is a delay in reaching hospital, and a second dose is required.
- Always have your AAI with you at all times. If you need to use it, always call 999 for an ambulance telling the call handler it is 'anaphylaxis' so they can prioritise the response. (Pronounced Ana-fil-axis).
- Adrenaline is a short-acting drug and the effects will wear off quite quickly. It is very likely that further treatment will be required which is why it is important to call an ambulance. All patients receiving emergency adrenaline should immediately be taken to hospital.

## Key facts:

### AAIs have an expiry date

Set a reminder or register for an expiry alert service several weeks before it is due to expire.

AAI's are a **ONCE ONLY** use medical device and cannot be reused.

## References

1. MHRA guidance on adrenaline auto-injectors: updated advice after European review <https://www.gov.uk/drug-safety-update/adrenaline-auto-injectors-updated-advice-after-european-review> accessed 10/08/2021

## Clinical contributions:

### Allergy UK Clinical Team

Amena Warner, Head of Clinical Services

## Additional resources

Our **Anaphylaxis and Severe Allergic Reaction** web page provides help and advice around the causes, symptoms and treatments of severe allergic reaction, including FREE Factsheets and AAI demonstration videos:

[www.allergyuk.org/information-and-advice/conditions-and-symptoms/33-anaphylaxis-and-severe-allergic-reaction](http://www.allergyuk.org/information-and-advice/conditions-and-symptoms/33-anaphylaxis-and-severe-allergic-reaction)

For information and advice on a wide range of allergic conditions and topics, visit:

[www.allergyuk.org/information-and-advice/conditions-and-symptoms](http://www.allergyuk.org/information-and-advice/conditions-and-symptoms)

## Allergy UK Helpline

Mon-Fri, 9am-5pm:

Call: 01322 619 898

Email: [info@allergyuk.org](mailto:info@allergyuk.org)

Visit us at:

**Allergyuk.org**