



## **Study shows worrisome increase in cases of anaphylaxis among children and underuse of epinephrine auto-injectors**

London Drugs Pharmacists say anaphylaxis awareness, preparedness and access to treatment is critical for children heading back to school

**September 7, 2016** – Findings from AllerGen’s Cross-Canada Anaphylaxis Registry (C-CARE) reveal a ‘worrisome increase’ in anaphylaxis cases among children. The percentage of emergency department visits due to [anaphylaxis](#) doubled over the four-year [research](#) period.

London Drugs Pharmacy Manager, Jason Chan-Remillard, says that the research underscores the need for teachers, parents and caregivers to broaden their awareness of emergency [anaphylactic treatment](#) required for school-age children with severe allergies. While awareness in schools about allergies has grown in recent years, there is a lag in understanding when it comes to using auto-injectors such as [EpiPen](#).

[The research](#), which is the first to assess the rate, triggers and management of anaphylaxis in different provinces and settings across Canada, also highlighted the underuse of epinephrine auto-injectors. Only slightly more than half of children in the study who visited the emergency department due to anaphylaxis used an auto-injector prior to their arrival.

“Teachers, parents and caregivers must be able to recognize the signs and [symptoms of anaphylaxis](#) and know how to initiate treatment. Understanding how to administer epinephrine in an emergency is just as important as other lifesaving skills like CPR or the Heimlich maneuver,” says Chan-Remillard.

He suggests that parents of children with severe allergies must work with teachers and caregivers at the start of each school year to create an action plan with an explanation of the child’s allergy triggers, what to do in case of reaction, where they have access to epinephrine and how to administer emergency anaphylactic treatment.

“It’s especially important for lunchroom personnel to be aware of children’s health status. Often times, that requires the parents to speak with them directly about their child’s allergy triggers.”

Chan-Remillard explains that there is sometimes a misconception that peanuts are the only trigger for severe food allergies. In actuality there are [nine food allergens commonly associated with allergic reactions](#); eggs, fish, milk, peanuts, sesame seeds, soy, sulphites, tree nuts, wheat and other cereal grains that contain gluten.

Epinephrine auto-injectors expire so the start of a new school year is an important time to check dates and update prescriptions at [London Drugs pharmacies](#). Expired auto-injectors can be properly disposed of in the sharps disposal bin at any [London Drugs location](#) and pharmacists can provide re-education about how to self-administer EpiPen.

- Food allergy is a growing public health issue in Canada and Canada's increase in anaphylaxis rate is consistent with the world-wide reported increase.\*
- About 300,000 Canadian children under 18 years have food allergies.\*\*
- Peanut allergy in Canada affects about 2 in 100 children.\*\*
- It is estimated that almost 600,000 Canadians will experience anaphylaxis in their lifetime and that more than half of the individuals who had anaphylaxis were not equipped with life-saving epinephrine.\*

\* AllerGen NCE Inc. [Press Release](#)

\*\* [Food Allergy Canada](#)

### **ABOUT LONDON DRUGS**

Founded in 1945, B.C.-based London Drugs has 79 stores in more than 35 major markets throughout British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba including its online store [www.londondrugs.com](http://www.londondrugs.com) London Drugs offers consumers a range of products from digital cameras and cosmetics to computers and televisions. Renowned for its creative approach to retailing, the company employs more than 7,000 people with pharmacy and health care services being the heart of its business. Committed to innovation and superior customer service, London Drugs has established itself as a reputable and caring company and continues to position itself for future growth and development.

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London Drugs Pharmacists are available for interviews regarding allergies, auto-injectors and to provide general health advice for a healthy school year.

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