

Study: Fewer than half of children with severe allergies receive life-saving epinephrine

London Drugs Pharmacists remind parents, teachers and other caregivers that epinephrine auto-injectors should be the first line of defense when treating anaphylaxis

August 22, 2017 – When children with life threatening allergies experience anaphylaxis, parents, teachers and other caregivers often fail to administer epinephrine, according to a [study](#) published in Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology in July. The study showed that less than 40 per cent of kids — even those who had previously experienced anaphylaxis and been prescribed an epinephrine auto-injector — received a dose of the drug before they got to the emergency room or an urgent care clinic after experiencing a reaction.

London Drugs Pharmacy Manager, Gianni Del Negro says that the research suggests a need for more anaphylaxis education and awareness.

“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 the EpiPen. It is critical for anyone working with school-age children to be able to recognize the symptoms of anaphylaxis and understand how to use auto-injectors,” he says.

Within minutes, an allergic reaction can turn into a life-threatening situation. Using epinephrine immediately after exposure to an allergy trigger can help reverse the symptoms.

“Reaction times and symptoms are different for each child and there is no way to predict the severity of a reaction because the signs may not be the same for each occurrence. If a child has a known risk for anaphylaxis and caregivers suspect they may be experiencing a reaction, it is better to administer an injection rather than wait for paramedics or emergency care,” says Del Negro.

Since the effects of epinephrine can wear off and children can have subsequent allergic reactions, caregivers are advised to call 911 or take the child to the emergency room immediately after using an auto-injector.

He suggests that parents of children with severe allergies 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.

The start of a new school year is an important time to check expiration dates since epinephrine auto-injectors expire. Expired products can be properly disposed of at any London Drugs [location](#) and pharmacists are available to counsel patients on how to properly administer them. Prescriptions are not required for epinephrine auto-injectors; however, some insurance plans cover them if the patient has a prescription.

Signs and symptoms of a life-threatening allergic reaction may include:

- Hives
- Nausea, cramping, diarrhea, or vomiting
- Swelling of the face and throat
- Wheezing or difficulty breathing
- Chest pain

- Flushing
- Headache
- Seizures

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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 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, anaphylaxis and epinephrine auto-injectors.

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