

Attention: Pharmacies and Pharmacists

NATIONAL

Subject: Important: National EpiPen® Shortage (Wholesale and Retail)

Date: July 30, 2018

Please be advised that throughout the month of August 2018 there will be a nationwide shortage of Pfizer Canada's EpiPen® (0.3 mg) epinephrine auto-injectors. During this shortage we expect **no** new inventory will be available at wholesale or retail.

EpiPen Jr® (0.15 mg) epinephrine auto-injectors will continue to be available in limited quantities and is being managed through measured national allocation to wholesalers to support the provision of EpiPen Jr (0.15 mg) auto-injectors to patients across the country.

EpiPen® and EpiPen Jr® are indicated for the emergency treatment of anaphylactic reactions in patients who are determined to be at increased risk for anaphylaxis, including individuals with a history of anaphylactic reactions.

During the shortage, and given the likelihood that quantities are expected to deplete across all pharmacies, pharmacists are encouraged to only process **one** EpiPen® per patient (where possible), effective immediately, to preserve supply in order to provide care to as many patients as possible until product becomes available.

EpiPen® products expire on the last day of the month indicated on the product packaging. For example, if the product is marked as expiring in August/2018, it remains valid (not expired) until August 31, 2018.

Health Canada issued an "Information Update" communication related to the shortage of EpiPen (0.3 mg) auto-injectors in Canada on July 30, 2018. In the communication, Health Canada recommends that in this shortage situation, if an individual is experiencing an anaphylactic reaction and has only an expired auto-injector immediately available, they should use the expired product and immediately contact 911.

Regardless of whether the product is expired, as usual, a patient should get to the nearest hospital as soon as possible following the administration of the product.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for Patients:

1. What is the indication for EpiPen®, and format for administration?

EpiPen® is indicated for the emergency treatment of anaphylactic reactions in patients who are determined to be at increased risk for anaphylaxis, including individuals with a history of anaphylactic reactions.

The EpiPen® auto-injector is a disposable, pre-filled automatic injection device that administers epinephrine in the event of a severe allergic reaction. EpiPen® comes in two dosage strengths:

- *0.3 mg for adults and for children weighing 30 kg (66 lbs) or more;*
- *0.15 mg for children weighing 15–30 kg (33–66 lbs).*

2. Why is there an EpiPen® shortage and how long will it last?

Manufacturing delays have led to a shortage of Pfizer Canada's EpiPen®.

*In Canada, a shortage is expected to last throughout the month of August 2018. It is anticipated that this shortage will last a period of 3-4 weeks where **no new** inventory will be available for both the wholesaler and retail levels.*

*During the shortage, Health Canada encourages Pharmacists to only process **one** EpiPen® per patient (where possible), effective immediately, to preserve supply in order to provide care to as many patients as possible until the product becomes available.*

3. What is being done to address the supply issues in Canada?

Pfizer Canada understands and regrets the challenges that this supply interruption poses to clinicians and patients. Pfizer Canada is managing this supply interruption as a priority and is working diligently to restore supply of EpiPen® in Canada.

4. Why did my Pharmacist only provide me with one EpiPen® even though I had a prescription for more?

*Unfortunately, EpiPen® quantities are limited. Pharmacists are encouraged to help manage supply for patients during this temporary supply interruption. As a result, Pharmacists are highly encouraged to only process **one** EpiPen® per patient (where possible), effective immediately, to preserve supply in order to provide care to as many patients as possible until the product becomes available.*

5. Will injecting an expired EpiPen® be effective in treating an anaphylactic allergic reaction?

Health Canada issued an “Information Update” communication related to the shortage of EpiPen (0.3 mg) auto-injectors in Canada on July 30, 2018. In the communication, Health Canada recommends that in this shortage situation, if an individual is experiencing an anaphylactic reaction and has only an expired auto-injector immediately available, they should use the expired product and immediately contact 911.

Even if symptoms are mild or have stopped, patients must follow standard procedures and immediately go to the nearest hospital to seek medical attention. Observation is necessary to ensure the anaphylactic allergic reaction has been controlled.

Note: *EpiPen® products expire on the last day of the month indicated on the product packaging. For example, if the product is marked as expiring in August/2018, it remains valid (not expired) until August 31, 2018.*

6. What can be done when EpiPen® stock becomes unavailable at the Retail and Wholesaler level?

It is anticipated that during this shortage, as the demand for EpiPen® increases, the limited quantities in the Canadian market will eventually become depleted.

Health Canada issued an “Information Update” communication related to the shortage of EpiPen (0.3 mg) auto-injectors in Canada on July 30, 2018. In the communication, Health Canada recommends that in this shortage situation, if an individual is experiencing an anaphylactic reaction and has only an expired auto-injector immediately available, they should use the expired product and immediately contact 911.

However, if an alternate supply is not available, and you experience an anaphylactic allergic reaction, immediately call 911.

Even if symptoms are mild or have stopped, patients must follow standard procedures and immediately go to the nearest hospital to seek medical attention. Observation is necessary to ensure the anaphylactic allergic reaction has been controlled.

Antihistamines should not be used instead of EpiPen® during an anaphylactic allergic reaction.

7. What can be done to prevent an anaphylactic allergic reaction during this EpiPen® shortage?

It is important that, as usual, patients try to avoid any triggers that may contribute to their anaphylactic allergic reaction.

8. Is there an alternative epinephrine auto-injector available on the Canadian market?

No, there are no alternative epinephrine auto-injectors currently available on the market.

9. If a patient is unable to obtain an EpiPen® in the 0.3 mg format, in the case of a severe allergic reaction, would administration of two doses of EpiPen® Jr. (0.15 mg) suffice?

Refer to your doctor for appropriate actions to be taken.

10. Who should I contact at Pfizer if I have additional questions about the shortage?

If you have an inquiry of a medical nature related to EpiPen® auto-injectors, please contact Pfizer's Medical Information Group:

- *Phone: 1-800-463-6001*
- *Website: www.pfizermedicalinformation.com*

For general inquiries, please call Customer Relations:

- *Phone: 1-877-EPIPEN1 (1-877-374-7361)*