



1.

Helpsheet

Managing Anaphylaxis in the workplace

General recommendations for management in the workplace

The employee should be encouraged to disclose they are at risk of severe allergic reactions at the commencement of employment.

The employer should consider implementing some strategies to reduce the risk of severe allergic reactions in the work-place.

Any employee who has been diagnosed with severe allergy and been prescribed an adrenaline autoinjector such as an EpiPen® / Anapen® should have an Action Plan for Anaphylaxis kept with their adrenaline autoinjector. Severely allergic employees who carry an adrenaline autoinjector should inform the employer, supervisor or person in charge of its location.e.g. on desk or in backpack or handbag.

Because of the potential severity and sudden onset of the allergic reaction, NO worker should be expected to be completely responsible for the self administration of their adrenaline autoinjector EpiPen® / Anapen®. Assistance should be provided.

Colleagues can be trained to recognise severe allergic reactions and administer adrenaline via an autoinjector. A valuable tool for staff to gain a better understanding, recognition and management of anaphylaxis, can be accessed through a free online anaphylaxis e-training course developed by the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA) in conjunction with the Health Departments of Western Australia and New South Wales (NSW). Visit www.allergy.org.au for more information.

This course provides ready access to reliable anaphylaxis education throughout Australia and New Zealand, at no charge. The majority of first aid providers (e.g. Red Cross, St John Ambulance) provide training in anaphylaxis management during their first aid courses. A work colleague does not need to have a first aid certificate in order to administer an adrenaline autoinjector EpiPen® / Anapen® according to the allergic individual's Action Plan for Anaphylaxis.

Any worker who has severe allergies should be encouraged to wear a Medic-Alert bracelet or necklace, or other suitable identification. **Action Plans for Anaphylaxis** can be purchased from Allergy & Anaphylaxis Australia www.allergyfacts.org.au or downloaded from www.allergy.org.au



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Managing Anaphylaxis in the workplace

Visit www.allergy.org.au Australia's peak body of clinical allergy and immunology.

Here you will find a wealth of Anaphylaxis resources covering:

- ASCIA Action Plans for Anaphylaxis - EpiPen® and Anapen® versions and ASCIA Action Plan for Allergic Reactions
- Frequently asked questions and answers – ASCIA Action Plans
- Frequently asked questions and answers - adrenaline autoinjectors
- ASCIA First Aid for Anaphylaxis - including translated information
- ASCIA Travel Plan for people at risk of anaphylaxis
- Anaphylaxis Guidelines for Schools and Children's Services
- ASCIA Guidelines for prevention of food anaphylactic reactions in schools, preschools and childcare centres
- ASCIA anaphylaxis e-training
- Adrenaline autoinjectors for general use
- Adrenaline autoinjector storage, expiry and disposal
- Requests for adrenaline autoinjectors on PBS authority prescription
- ASCIA Guidelines for adrenaline autoinjector prescription
- PBS listing for adrenaline autoinjectors
- National Prescribing Service

SCENARIOS THAT MIGHT ARISE IN THE WORKPLACE

When a workplace celebration or training is planned where food is provided, the employee with food allergies should be consulted and the menu be adapted accordingly.

- Example for those with nut allergy: Bowls of nuts provided at an office celebration are not recommended as cross contamination is high. People put their hand in the nut bowl and then go directly to the chip bowl, contaminating chips which may originally have been fine for the nut allergic individual. It is not as simple as expecting the nut allergic individual to avoid the nut bowl.
- Some venues/activities pose a greater risk e.g. a buffet meal on a harbour cruise would be considered high risk as the risk of cross contamination in buffet style meals is high through shared utensils and spillage. Access to prompt medical back up is critical to emergency management and in remote places or on a cruise this could be delayed.
- For the shellfish allergic person, choosing a seafood restaurant would exclude them from this outing as vapours from shellfish cooking can cause a severe reaction in very sensitive individuals. Choosing other cuisine styles which may still have shellfish dishes on their menu poses less risk to the shellfish allergic individual. The individual should be encouraged to disclose their allergy and obtain information as much as possible from the venue prior to eating in order to minimise risk.



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- Asian style restaurants are generally not recommended for those with peanut and tree nut allergy due to the high use of peanut and tree nut ingredients in dishes.
- The latex allergic individual needs to reduce contact with latex in the workplace. For some, this may mean not touching elastic bands or latex erasers but for others, strict strategies need to be implemented in order to reduce the amount of exposure to the latex allergen. Latex allergy can worsen with ongoing exposure. An employer must do what they can to accommodate the person with latex allergy. Non latex gloves must be made available if their work duties require use of gloves. The allergic individual should also carry their own latex free gloves in their medical kit with their adrenaline autoinjector EpiPen® / Anapen® and Action Plan for Anaphylaxis in case they are required.
- Be considerate of those with severe food allergy when eating in the workplace i.e. wash your hands after eating.
- Place some information about severe allergies in work memos, circulars, newsletters and industry publications.
- Use notice boards to place information about severe allergies.
- Make a note of Anaphylaxis Awareness Week held early May of each year, more information can be found on our website.
- Anaphylaxis Australia can provide a number of posters and training materials for the workplace.

Some recommended resources:

A3 Posters

- What you need to know
- Food Allergy Awareness
- Think FAST
- Action Plan for Anaphylaxis
- Canteen Checklist

Recommended for food service staff

- Food Service Kit
- Eating out with food allergies brochure
- Food Service card

Visit our shop at www.allergyfacts.org.au or email coordinator@allergyfacts.org.au for more information.

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