

# EpiPen

**EpiPen** is an injection that contains **epinephrine**, a chemical that narrows blood vessels and opens airways in the lungs. The allergic reactions, or **anaphylaxis**, treated with the use of EpiPen include those from insect stings or bites, certain foods, drugs, and other allergens.

**EpiPens** are a type of epinephrine auto-injector, which means they work by automatically injecting a dose of the hormone epinephrine (also called adrenaline) into a person's body. This could be done, for example, during a severe allergic reaction called **anaphylaxis**.

In a person with anaphylaxis, the immune system releases a flood of chemicals in response to an allergen. These chemicals can cause an onslaught of severe and life-threatening symptoms throughout the body, including a drop in blood pressure and constricted airways.

**A person can die from anaphylaxis** if his or her heart stops beating or the person stops breathing. These symptoms can come on quickly, **so it's important to call 911 immediately**.

One important note is that Epinephrine has a short half-life. It is therefore critical that anytime an EpiPen is used, the 911 system needs to be activated and the patient needs to be transported to the hospital.