

Majority of US adults prescribed epinephrine report not using it in an emergency

21 June 2018

The most effective, life-saving treatment for a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) is epinephrine. Yet a new study shows in an emergency, 52 percent of adults with potentially life-threatening allergies didn't use the epinephrine auto-injectors (EAI) they were prescribed.

The new study, published in *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*, the scientific journal of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI), examined 597 surveys representing 917 people. Some adults provided information both for themselves and their child with an EAI prescription.

"The majority of people surveyed (89 percent) filled the [prescriptions](#) they were given for an EAI," says Christopher Warren, Ph.D.(c), lead author of the study. "But almost half (45 percent) said they didn't have their EAI with them during their most severe allergic [reaction](#). This was despite the fact that 78 percent of the people responding had been hospitalized for their allergy at some point in their lifetime. Another 21 percent said they didn't know how to use their EAI."

ACAAI recommends that anyone who has been prescribed an EAI should always have it with them and that they should always carry two as the possibility exists that a severe reaction can reoccur. Moreover, [epinephrine](#) should be administered at the first sign of an anaphylactic reaction. This is particularly important for those who have had a previous anaphylactic reaction or who have both a severe allergy and [asthma](#).

"It's not enough to simply pick up your EAI prescription," says Ruchi Gupta, MD, MPH, ACAAI member, and co-author of the study. "You need to know how to use your EAI and always carry it, to be prepared for an [allergy](#) emergency. It could

save your life." About half the survey participants said an EAI was accessible (within five minutes) all of the time, while 44 percent said they personally carried at least one EAI all the time. Fewer than 25 percent of those surveyed said they routinely carried multiple EAIs.

More information: *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology* (2018). [DOI: 10.1016/j.anai.2018.06.010](#)

Provided by American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

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