



# BC PharmaCare Newsletter



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### EpiPen Shortage – Pharmacist Product Selection to Mitigate Supply Issues

On July 30, 2018, Pfizer and Health Canada issued statements warning pharmacies and the public of a severe shortage of EpiPen 0.3mg/0.3 mL product throughout the month of August. EpiPens have been in short supply for an extended period, and many pharmacies were already dispensing cautiously. The manufacturer has been managing supply at a national level and will continue to do so. Limits in PharmaNet have restricted the number of EpiPens per dispense (covered by PharmaCare) to 2 per person per fill, since April 2018.

Ampoules of epinephrine are a regular PharmaCare benefit (DIN 00721891) and may be dispensed to patients upon receipt of a prescription for EpiPen, if the patient and pharmacist agree that such a dispense is appropriate. Patients will then need to purchase syringes, as syringes for non-diabetic use are not PharmaCare benefits (except under Plan W). Pharmacists should ensure that patients are comfortable with drawing and injecting epinephrine using a standard syringe.

Additionally, as of August 1, 2018, PharmaCare will cover adult doses of epinephrine in pre-drawn syringes via a PIN. Coverage is subject to a patient's PharmaCare plan rules, and any deductibles.

Pharmacists may dispense pre-drawn syringes if and when they are comfortable and able to do so. Pre-drawn syringes of epinephrine dispensed in place of an EpiPen product should be claimed under the following PIN:

PIN	PRODUCT	EFFECTIVE DATE
22123358	Epinephrine 0.3mg/0.3mL prefilled syringe	Aug 1, 2018

This PIN has been assigned a maximum price in PharmaNet of \$25.6580 which reflects coverage when dispensing one prefilled syringe. When dispensing multiple syringes to a patient, the pharmacy is expected to charge only an amount that corresponds to PharmaCare's [compound pricing policy](#).

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The use of PharmaNet is not intended as a substitute for professional judgment. Information on PharmaNet is not exhaustive and cannot be relied upon as complete. The absence of a warning about a drug or drug combination is not an indication that the drug or drug combination is safe, appropriate or effective in any given patient. Health care professionals should confirm information obtained from PharmaNet, and ensure no additional relevant information exists, before making patient care decisions.

[www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacarepharmacists](http://www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacarepharmacists) | [www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacareprescribers](http://www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacareprescribers) | [www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacaredeviceproviders](http://www.gov.bc.ca/pharmacaredeviceproviders)



Ministry of Health

## EpiPen Jr.

EpiPen 0.15 mg/0.3mL (EpiPen Jr.) remains available but in short supply. It is clinically appropriate to use two units of EpiPen Jr. for adults experiencing anaphylactic reactions if necessary. However, this is an expensive option and potentially reduces the available stock for pediatric use. If your pharmacy has or expects to have a low supply of EpiPen Jr., please preferentially dispense ampoules or pre-drawn syringes of epinephrine to adult patients and reserve EpiPen Jr. for pediatric patients. If a prescription indicates “No Substitutions,” please assess the need to contact the prescribing physician to discuss.

**Note:** *dispensing ampoules or pre-drawn syringes of epinephrine, in place of an EpiPen, constitutes product selection, not adaptation, as the dose and medication are identical and only the delivery device is different. PharmaCare does not pay an adaptation fee for an alternate product selection.*