



PUBLICATIONS

0109

ANAPHYLAXIS : BEING PREPARED COULD SAVE LIVES

*Reprinted from Fall 2001
COWAN NEWS*

Excerpts reprinted with permission by Parks & Recreation Canada May/June 2001 issue ----- and Lorene Bodiam, Recreation Supervisor, Parks and Recreation, City of Toronto

Being Prepared Could Save Lives

With summer soon behind us it is back to school and back to fall and winter programs for Parks & Recreation departments across the country. Unfortunately allergies and anaphylaxis do not end with a change in the season. The following article gives practical advice on how to make your ongoing programs safer for these children. The complete version appears in the May/June 2001 issue of Parks & Recreation Canada.

Anaphylaxis can appear suddenly and violently. It can be developed by anyone – not just those with known

allergies. Every child with anaphylaxis is counting on the help of recreation staff to stay safe, both by preventing and dealing with an allergic reaction. Working as a team, parents and staff can help keep anaphylaxis manageable and have safer facilities and programs.

Program Assessment Issues

Review your program or facility with the following points in mind:

- How safe are children with anaphylaxis/allergic conditions in your programs?
- How many of these children attend programs without their epinephrine?
- How prepared is staff to handle an anaphylaxis emergency?
- What are the legal implications in your jurisdiction regarding allergy management?

Pre-Program

Registration forms should ask if a child needs or uses an EpiPen® autoinjector, and advise that children must bring EpiPens® to all programs. The form should stress that if the EpiPen® is forgotten, efforts will be made to reach the family to have them either bring the EpiPen® or pick up the child. Advise parents that normally one pen is required per child. However, more may be necessary if an activity is more than 10 minutes from a medical facility. Consider using a trainer to educate staff on anaphylaxis and to practice how to use an EpiPen®. To familiarize staff with the health concerns of each child, consider posting the completed allergy alert forms and a recent photo of the child in all common areas including offices, staff rooms and the lunch area.

continued ⇔

Frank Cowan Company Limited
Canada's Insurance & Risk Specialists
4 Cowan Street East
Princeton, ON N0J 1V0

1 800 265 4000
T/ 519 458 4331 F/ 519 458 4366



PUBLICATIONS

0109

ANAPHYLAXIS : BEING PREPARED COULD SAVE LIVES

*Reprinted from Fall 2001
COWAN NEWS*

Educate

Send a friendly reminder to parents requesting that allergic foods not be sent with their children and consider removing nut items from vending machines. To avoid singling out children, it may be necessary to form a "Peanut Club"; a special area for children with peanut products to eat, wash hands and clean up after together.

During Programming

The EpiPen® should be kept with the child at all times, preferably in a waist pouch. When swimming, the pens are the child's responsibility but leaders, lifeguards and other staff need to know its location. An ideal solution is a waterproof box that floats. During hot weather, a colour change may indicate the pen has lost effectiveness. And, in cold temperatures, ensure children carry EpiPens® close to their bodies.

Choose activities where allergic children can participate fully (for example: no acorns in craft programs with children allergic to nuts). When groups leave on field trips or walks ensure they have phones, walkie-talkies or are accompanied by at least two staff members. Be sure to have attendance forms and procedures available during bus outings to ensure that children who require EpiPens® are carrying them at all times.

Parents must be informed in advance of activities involving food, such as cookouts, bake sales, parties and trips. Ensure that all allergenic foods are kept in a separate area and that food, drinks, straws or utensils are not shared or mixed between containers.

Above all, listen to and believe the child! The child may feel a reaction before you see it.

Symptoms of Anaphylactic Shock Include:

- Nausea, vomiting and diarrhea;
- Difficulty breathing;
- Wheezing and excessive drooling;
- Trouble swallowing or throat closing;
- Coughing and hoarseness;
- Extreme weakness or dizziness;
- Pale, cold, clammy skin;
- Sense of impending doom;
- Fainting;
- Loss of consciousness;
- Change of colour.

Dealing with Anaphylactic Shock

When confronted with anaphylactic shock, staff members should follow three steps:

1. Implement emergency action plan using protocols supplied by parents and/or doctors.

continued ⇨

Frank Cowan Company Limited
Canada's Insurance & Risk Specialists
4 Cowan Street East
Princeton, ON N0J 1V0

1 800 265 4000
T/ 519 458 4331 F/ 519 458 4366



PUBLICATIONS

0109

ANAPHYLAXIS : BEING PREPARED COULD SAVE LIVES

*Reprinted from Fall 2001
COWAN NEWS*

- Administer EpiPen®. Another child's EpiPen® should not be used. Call 911 – advise child is having an anaphylactic reaction with breathing difficulties.

Disposing of EpiPen®

In some Parks and Recreation facilities it is a requirement to have biohazard containers on site. In an emergency a heavy card or glass containers might be used for short-term storage until

proper receptacles are obtained. Pens should not be recapped in an original container as staff could easily prick themselves.

Conclusion

It is important to recognize that there is no legal obligation for staff to provide an “allergen-free” environment. Parents should never be told that a risk-free environment exists – suggesting it does create a false sense of security.

With the increased incidence of anaphylaxis

and complexity of the strategies to deal with it, standardized training is an essential topic, since we have a duty to children in our programs to provide an environment that is safe.

For further information please contact:

Anaphylaxis Canada.

Address:

416 Moore, Suite 305,
Toronto, M4G 1C9,
Phone 416-785-5666,
Fax 416-785-0458.



Frank Cowan Company Limited
Canada's Insurance & Risk Specialists
4 Cowan Street East
Princeton, ON N0J 1V0

1 800 265 4000
T/ 519 458 4331 F/ 519 458 4366