

Epinephrine Pen Acquisition and Use Fact Sheet

Background

Epinephrine injection is used to treat life-threatening allergic reactions caused by insect bites, latex, and other causes. Symptoms of allergic reaction include wheezing, shortness of breath, low blood pressure, hives, itching, swelling, stomach cramps, diarrhea, and loss of bladder control. Epinephrine is in a class of medications called sympathomimetic agents. It works by relaxing the muscles in the airways and tightening the blood vessels.

Iowa State University (ISU) employees who, as part of their daily work activities, are exposed to bee/wasp venom or other workplace hazards that may result in an allergic reaction could potentially be at risk and may need an epinephrine pen (EpiPen).

Acquisition

Workplace Hazard Exists

ISU employees who have workplace hazards that may result in an allergic reaction must indicate on the ISU Occupational Medicine Program's [Hazard Inventory form](#) that they are at risk (Animals: Bees/Wasps A935). Employees who are known to have a systemic allergic reaction to the venom should carry, or have available at a moment's notice, an epinephrine dispensing pen. To acquire an EpiPen for workplace use, the employee must obtain a prescription from the Occupational Medicine physician. ISU's Occupational Medicine staff will train and document with an outline of the training, date and participants. Contact ISU Occupational Medicine to schedule an appointment (515-294-2056). Once an exam and training have been completed, the EpiPen may be acquired at a local pharmacy. This service will be charged to the requesting department and not to the individual.

No Workplace Hazard Exists

ISU employees who do **not** have workplace hazards that may result in an allergic reaction but are nonetheless known to have a systemic allergic reaction to the venom should carry, or have available at a moment's notice, an epinephrine dispensing pen. To acquire an EpiPen, the employee should obtain a prescription from their private physician and then acquire it through their pharmacy.

Emergency Use

EpiPens should be readily available in areas associated with apiaries/wasps for emergency use by visitors, grounds keepers, etc. who may be exposed to/near the bees/wasps. The EpiPens should be placed in the First Aid Kits and will be administered by First Responders (CPR, AED and First Aid) who have been trained to use them. ISU's Occupational Medicine staff will train and document with an outline of the training, date and participants. Contact Occupational Medicine for an appointment (515-294-2056).

Disposal

EpiPen users must observe the expiration date of the individual pens and replace accordingly. Expired EpiPens are considered hazardous waste and must be returned to the pharmacy where they were purchased for proper disposal.

Students

Students who are known to have a systemic allergic reaction to bee/wasps venom may acquire an EpiPen from their pharmacy of choice with a prescription from their private physician or doctor.

Procedures

1. ISU EH&S or Ames Laboratory Environmental Safety and Health Assurances (ESH&A) determines that there is an occupational bee/wasp sting hazard.
2. If an individual working has a known allergy to bee/wasp stings, then he/she MUST procure their own EpiPen from their primary physician.
3. For all others who do not have known bee/wasp sting allergies, but have a known bee/wasp sting hazard, then a first aid kit, including an EpiPen, should be made available to take to the field locations where the groups will work/research. The first aid kit should be purchased from Central Stores to ensure it meets the needs defined in the ISU first aid kit guidelines.
4. Researchers will communicate with EH&S/ESH&A on the number of first aid kits necessary to meet their needs. Once confirmed, EH&S/ESH&A will forward that to Occupational Medicine who will write a prescription for and EpiPen to be filled at Thielen Student Health Center.
5. The researcher will be responsible for accounting for and maintaining the first aid kits, including keeping the EpiPens stocked, ensure any expired items are replaced, etc.
6. Each individual taking a first aid kit out to their respective research areas must have basic training in the use of first aid and EpiPens. First aid is provided by EH&S in the CPR, AED and First Aid training. EpiPen training should be provided by the physician. Documentation of this training is then forwarded to Occupational Medicine.
7. If an EpiPen is used, that incident should be reported to EH&S/ESH&A and a replacement EpiPen procured from Student Health via a prescription from Occupational Medicine.

Resources

- [National Institutes of Health](#)
- [Occupational Medicine Program](#)
- [Hazard Inventory for Occupational Medical Surveillance](#)