

From the Chief Medical Officer  
Dr Michael McBride



Department of  
**Health**

An Roinn Sláinte

Mánnystrie O Poustie

[www.health-ni.gov.uk](http://www.health-ni.gov.uk)

**HSS(MD) 23/2018**

**For Action:**

Chief Executive PHA  
Chief Executives HSC Trusts/NIAS (for onward cascade to all relevant staff)  
Chief Executive HSCB (for onward distribution to All General Practitioners, Practice Managers and Community Pharmacies)  
All General Practitioners and GP Locums (for onward distribution to relevant practice staff)

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Dear Colleague

**EpiPen and EpiPen Junior (adrenaline auto-injector devices) – Supply Disruption Alert**

**IMMEDIATE ACTIONS FOR ALL HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS IN PRIMARY, SECONDARY OR SPECIALIST HEALTHCARE SERVICES WHO PRESCRIBE, DISPENSE OR ADMINISTER ADRENALINE AUTO-INJECTORS**

EpiPen and EpiPen Junior will be subject to limited availability for the remainder of 2018. Mylan are now out of stock of EpiPen Junior and interruptions in the supply are anticipated to continue for the coming months.

**The attached supply alert from MHRA** provides full details of actions to take around the prescribing, dispensing and administration of adrenaline auto-injectors. Actions should be taken immediately upon receipt of this alert. Patients will be advised to contact their GP when they need a new supply.

In summary, all health care professionals in primary, secondary or specialist healthcare services who prescribe, dispense or administer adrenaline auto-injectors, or who advise patients and their carers should ensure that:

1) Adult and child auto-injectors are only prescribed and dispensed to those who truly need them, as any additional issuing to patients who are worried about the shortages could exacerbate the overall supply situation.

2) Due to ongoing constraints affecting EpiPen 300mcg and EpiPen 150mcg devices, some adults and children may need to switch from their usual device to other alternative adrenaline auto-injector devices that may be more readily available. The different brands of adrenaline auto-injectors are not used in exactly the same way and therefore specific training and advice is required for each of the devices - **please see information on these alternative devices in the attached alert (page4).**

3) Junior adrenaline auto-injectors (150mcg) must only be dispensed in line with the existing established guidance i.e. to children under 30kg. Other children weighing more than 30kg need to be given adult auto-injectors (300mcg) – see further guidance in the attached alert.

4) Repeat prescriptions and supply are managed diligently and patients advised of the following:

a) It is important to note that when validating the expiry date of an adrenaline auto-injector, the product expires on the last day of the month indicated e.g. a device labelled 'April 2019' does not expire until the end of April 2019.

b) Certain batches of adult EpiPen can be safely used for four months after the expiry date has passed - please see further information about these batches in the attached alert. Where possible, prescribers should not prescribe a replacement adult EpiPen whilst the original is within the extended use by date.

c) Patients should be advised not to dispose of their expired devices until they have replaced them.

5) Prescribers should work in close collaboration with their local pharmacies to understand which devices are available. Prescribers should work together with practice based pharmacists and community pharmacists to ensure patients who are switched to an alternative device are trained appropriately and understand how to use the new device.

6) Prescribers, practice based pharmacists and pharmacies should regularly check the following Specialist Pharmacy Services website for additional updates to supply and clinical guidance.

<https://www.sps.nhs.uk/articles/shortage-of-epipen/>

Yours sincerely



**Dr Michael McBride**  
**Chief Medical Officer**



**Dr Mark Timoney**  
**Chief Pharmaceutical Officer**

## CIRCULATION LIST

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Director of Nursing, Public Health Agency  
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Director of Social Care and Children, HSCB  
Director of Integrated Care, HSCB  
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<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/topics/professional-medical-and-environmental-health-advice/hssmd-letters-and-urgent-communications>