



What you need to know about...

Epi-Pens and Inhalers in School

In 2006, Governor Blagojevich signed a unanimously supported bill allowing Illinois children to carry and self-administer their prescription asthma medication in school with the permission of a physician and parent.

The original law only provided for asthma inhalers, but it was amended to include epinephrine auto-injectors, also known as epi-pens, which temporarily control anaphylaxis.

An Epi-pen is a disposable medical device for immediate self-administration by a person with a history of anaphylaxis. Epi-pens however, only work for a limited time and must be followed by appropriate medical attention.

Twenty-four states currently have laws or regulations in place that allow students, with proper authorization, to possess their prescribed epinephrine during the school day.

According to the Food Allergy and Anaphylaxis Network, anaphylaxis is a sudden, severe and systematic reaction to an allergen that occurs in various areas of the body and can be life threatening. Common allergens include food, medication, insect bites and latex.



Like anaphylaxis, asthma is triggered by substances that cannot always be controlled. In school, children encounter various substances such as dander from classroom pets and dust from books. Cold weather, pollen and exercise may also trigger asthma attacks.

Asthma is the primary cause of school absenteeism due to a chronic illness among children. The right-to-carry law gives children the ability to control their asthma and as a result experience a better quality of life.