

Ask a Doctor: Is my EpiPen still good?

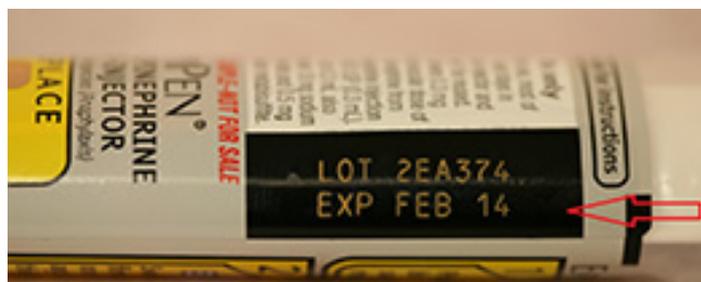
Posted on Mar 12, Posted by [Kraig W. Jacobson, M.D.](#) Category [Ask a Doctor](#)

A patient recently asked me how to tell whether her [EpiPen](#)® was still usable. Knowing that other patients may have the same question, I'd be happy to provide some answers.

An EpiPen® allows a person to inject epinephrine (adrenaline) into the body when a severe anaphylactic reaction takes place, often caused by a bee sting or food allergies.

The ideal situation is that your EpiPen® is in-date. You can find the expiration date on back side as illustrated in the photo with the red arrow. In addition, it should never be stored in a place that is too hot or cold, as that may cause the epinephrine to be oxidized and inactivated. Moreover, it is important to have your pen accessible at all times.

Expiration date and storage tips



Realistically, people forget about their EpiPen® and find that it's out of date when they least expect it, or when they are in a remote area. The good news is that pens that have been properly stored continue to have potency several years past the expiration date. If an emergency arises, it is better to use an outdated pen than to not to use it.

The best place to have a pen is with you and protected from heat and light. In Oregon, the trunk or glove compartment is OK but on the dashboard in direct sunlight will ruin an EpiPen® in a matter of hours.

Checking your EpiPen®

Become familiar with the window on your EpiPen®. A pen that has become ineffective due to time, temperature or sunlight will change color from clear to a light brown ice-tea color, as shown in the photos.

Thanks to the patient who asked this question!

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