City of Hamilton launches stock epinephrine auto-injector pilot project at Jackson Square mall

Security guards to carry epinephrine auto-injectors

TORONTO, ON – September 8, 2014 – A pilot project is being launched in Hamilton, Ontario today to examine the effects of stocking epinephrine auto-injectors (EAIs) at Jackson Square shopping mall. As part of the project, security guards have been trained to identify the symptoms and signs of anaphylaxis, the most serious form of an allergic reaction, and when and how to use an auto-injector (EpiPen® and Allerject™).

The pilot project, spearheaded by the City of Hamilton, involves McMaster University, Anaphylaxis Canada, First Real Properties Limited which manages Jackson Square and their security staff, and the Rotary Club of Ancaster AM. The project was inspired by the tragic death of a 12 year-old girl who succumbed to a likely anaphylactic reaction after consuming an ice cream cone purchased at a mall in Burlington, Ontario in 2013. It is estimated that approximately 2.5 million Canadians, about 1-in-15 people, have at least one food allergy, according to recent research. In the Hamilton area alone, up to 40,000 people are affected by food allergies. In addition to food allergies, there are many people who are allergic to stinging insects, medications, and latex.

“From this tragedy we hope to identify and implement practical measures to keep people with food allergies, especially children, safe and I am proud that we are the first city in Canada to undertake this important project,” said Hamilton City Councillor Lloyd Ferguson. “We have brought together well respected organizations with an expertise in research and training and leaders from the Hamilton community to make this happen.”

Food allergy is a leading cause of potentially life-threatening reactions and a growing public health concern in Canada. Food-allergic reactions can happen anywhere, including in one’s own home. When outside the home, however, risk factors increase as there is less control over one’s food; others may not be familiar with allergen management practices such as reading food labels and avoiding cross contamination during preparation and serving. Consider, in a 2011 Anaphylaxis Canada member survey, more than 30% of the 1,122 respondents...
said that they or their family member experienced an allergic reaction while dining at a foodservice establishment. Of these 337 individuals, about 68% (229 people) had alerted staff about their food allergies.

As there is no way of predicting how severe an allergic reaction may be and no known cure for food allergy, avoidance of allergens is the only means of staying safe. Individuals at risk must have epinephrine on hand in case of emergencies. Unfortunately, an underlying factor leading to fatal anaphylaxis, as shown by researchers worldwide, is the delay in administering epinephrine or not giving it at all. Early administration of epinephrine can reduce the severity of symptoms, improve an individual’s outcome, and save lives. “While the ultimate responsibility to carry and know how to use epinephrine auto-injectors rests with individuals at risk or their parents/guardians in the case of young children, others within the community can play an important role in keeping people safe,” said Laurie Harada, Executive Director of Anaphylaxis Canada and mother of a grown son with multiple food allergies.

Anaphylaxis Canada, contracted by the City of Hamilton, has developed a training program for mall security guards and senior staff in food courts and restaurants. The guards at Jackson Square have been taught to recognize the symptoms and signs of an allergic reaction and how to give epinephrine using “stock” or “undesignated” epinephrine auto-injectors. These devices are not prescribed for a particular person and may be used in an emergency to help individuals who are having an allergic reaction, who may not have their own device, or who may require an additional dose.

A research team, led by Dr. Susan Waserman, Professor of Medicine, McMaster University, will look at the efficacy of the training, use of stock epinephrine auto-injectors during the pilot project, and the knowledge of both consumers at risk of anaphylaxis and foodservice staff. “We are excited to participate in this unique initiative - allergic reactions can happen quickly and prompt medical attention is paramount to reducing the severity of a reaction. Improved awareness can save a life.” The results of McMaster’s research will be provided to the City of Hamilton by fall, 2015.

City of Hamilton

With a population of nearly 520,000, Hamilton is located at the western end of Lake Ontario in the Golden Horseshoe region. The City of Hamilton’s long-term vision is to make Hamilton the best place to raise a child, promote innovation, engage citizens and provide diverse economic opportunities.

Anaphylaxis Canada

Anaphylaxis Canada is a non-profit charitable organization dedicated to helping those at risk for anaphylaxis and those who care for them. The organization is committed to creating a safer world for people with life-threatening allergies through education, advocacy, and research. The organization’s approach to reducing the risk of anaphylactic reactions in both children and adults is focused on self-management, community engagement, understanding, and respect. For more information, please visit www.anaphylaxis.ca.
McMaster University

McMaster University, one of four Canadian universities listed among the Top 100 universities in the world, is renowned for its innovation in both learning and discovery. It has a student population of 28,000, and more than 159,000 alumni in 139 countries.

First Real Properties Limited

First Real Properties Limited, Second Real Properties Limited and Fourth Real Properties Limited are joint-venture companies owned by Yale Properties Limited and The Standard Life Assurance Company of Canada. The Real group of companies was formed between 1968-1981 to develop Lloyd D. Jackson Square in Hamilton, Ontario. Since that time, the companies have expanded into Calgary, Alberta and Toronto, Ontario. The Real group now holds a diverse portfolio containing 3.3 million square feet of office, retail and industrial assets, along with significant development lands. On-site property and leasing operations are led by a dedicated employee team, guided by the principles of long-term property stewardship.

Rotary Club of Ancaster AM

The Rotary Club of Ancaster AM is a group more than 40 Rotarians celebrating 23 years of service within our local, regional and global communities. The club has many achievements connected to its efforts and exemplifies the motto of Rotary International of "Service Above Self".

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