



HIVES/CHRONIC URTICARIA

Hives are red, very itchy, swollen areas of the skin. Hives arise suddenly and may leave quickly in one to two hours, or can last as long as 24 hours. They often appear in clusters, with new clusters appearing as other areas clear. Physicians refer to hives as urticaria. Over 20% of the population has suffered an eruption of hives at some point in their lives.

What Causes Hives?

Often hives are a side effect from eating certain *foods* or taking *medications*. Foods likely to cause hives include nuts, tomatoes, shellfish, and berries. Medications often responsible for producing hives are penicillin, sulfa, anticonvulsants, phenobarbital, and aspirin.

What are Some Other Causes of Hives?

A common form of hives is *dermatographism*, which occurs in 5% of the population. The hives are caused by a constant stroking or rubbing of the skin, and often occur after scratching, or when tight-fitting clothes rub the skin.

Cholinergic urticaria (hives) is the medical profession's term for hives that can develop after activities, which increase the body's temperature. Activities that can cause this include a warm bath, shower, jacuzzi, or hot tub use, exercise, a fever, or emotional stress. It has been estimated that 5% to 7% of patients who have hives experience cholinergic urticaria.

Cold-induced hives occur after exposure to cold wind or water. Hives may appear on limbs and generally on any exposed area. Cold water or liquids can provoke symptoms on the lips or in the mouth.

Solar hives are caused by exposure to sunlight or to a sunlamp, and a reaction can occur within one to three minutes.

Exercise is another cause of hives. Some individuals affected can also develop lung obstruction and/or lose consciousness. Such a severe reaction is called exercise-induced anaphylaxis.

Sometimes hives will occur in individuals recurrently without an obvious cause. This is called chronic urticaria (hives). While mainly a nuisance and not associated with other serious internal diseases, the exact mechanism for this condition is not known, and the hives usually disappear on their own.

What is Angioedema?

While hives develop on the skin's surface, *angioedema* is a swelling of the deeper layers of the skin. It most often occurs on the hands, feet, and face. If the angioedema occurs in the throat, normal breathing or swallowing can be blocked, and emergency measures must be taken. This is a rare occurrence, since most angioedema causes swelling of the lips or eyes with no long-lasting effects. Hives and angioedema may appear together or separately on the body. Angioedema usually lasts one or two days and may reoccur with or without hives over an indefinite period of time.

Hereditary angioedema is a rare inherited disease, which can be fatal in some cases, and in this respect differs from other types of chronic angioedema. Swelling can occur in the airways such as the larynx, tongue and throat, as well as on the face and other extremities. Swelling in the stomach area has led to severe pain and surgery for what was thought to be appendicitis. It has been demonstrated that a blood protein deficiency is the cause of the inherited illness.

How Can Hives Be Treated?

Avoidance of the foods, drugs, or other provoking factors is recommended whenever possible. Antihistamines such as hydroxyzine, diphenhydramine, pyrilamine, terfenadine are used to treat recurrent episodes. Use of these medications is recommended only under the guidance of your allergist.

Hydroxyzine is especially effective for the treatment of cholinergic urticaria. Cyproheptadine is used to treat cold-induced hives. If the hives do not respond to the antihistamines, H2 blocking medications (Zantac/Ranitidine) may be added. Many allergists will utilize corticosteroid medications such as prednisone, which are given in conjunction with the antihistamines. Most patients will improve with steroid treatment, but if possible steroids should be avoided for chronic use. Nevertheless, some patients, especially those with chronic hives, may require them. After a suitable interval, the individual can then discontinue use of the steroid medications. At that time, continued treatment with antihistamines is suggested until medication for the hives is no longer necessary.

In severe, acute cases where angioedema is involved, adrenalin injections may be necessary to alleviate the swelling. Hereditary angioedema can be very effectively treated with special hormone medications.

GENERAL COMMENTS REGARDING CHRONIC HIVES (URTICARIA)

First of all, the primary cause of hives often is a *combination of factors* that have more than likely passed, and it would be unusual for all of the factors that were required to fit together in the first place to appear again and re-precipitate the hives. However, once the hives appear, then multiple factors can keep them going. They include such items as stress, irritants, exercise, and bathing, and most importantly, foods to which one is not necessarily allergic but which have a capability of aggravating the hives. Our plan will be to remove as many of these triggering factors as we possibly can, and then to use medications to effectively counteract the results of what factors we cannot remove, and to stabilize you so that one is not so prone to hives, and then to gradually remove the medications and replace all foods and all activities.

SPECIFIC

1. Removal of triggering factors:

- A. Stress: Both physical stress, where one is working hard and a lack of sleep, can predispose one as can emotional stress; these should be limited if possible
- B. Irritants: Contact irritants such as from the sun, dryness or soaps can be a problem and I would prefer the use of mild detergents, such as Dreft or Ivory, instead of strong soaps such as Amway, Ajax or Tide. On the skin, I would use non-drying soaps such as Neutrogena or Aveeno bar. Use no softeners, such as Bounce.
- C. Exercise and bathing: One should not get overheated and I prefer that you not use hot showers but rather lukewarm baths, and that you not wear tight clothing which can cause pressure point problems. In addition, you should be cautious of being on your feet for an extended period of time or sitting for an extended period of time as well as using your hands in activities such as golf or hammering, etc., as these can effect those areas.
- D. Foods: There are foods which contain vasoactive-amines (chemicals called AMINES that act on the blood vessels the vaso), and these are as follows:
 1. Histamine is found in cheeses, alcohol, berries and the gourds (cantaloupe, watermelon, squash, and okra).
 2. Tyramine is found in eggs, cheese, and fermented foods including alcohol, pickles, sauerkraut, fish, and nuts.
 3. 5-Hydroxytryptamine is found in bananas and avocados.
 4. Beta-phenylethylamine is found in chocolate, colas, cheese, and alcohol
 5. Dopamine is found in beans.
 6. Octapamine is found in fresh fruits, especially citrus.

One should limit these foods as much as possible during this time and certainly not eat them in combination.

There are non-specific vasoactive-amine releasers (histamine, serotonin, SRSA, kinins, and prostaglandins) and these are both in foods, especially spicy foods, such as chili, or the use of spices and in medicines, especially minor analgesics, such as aspirin, codeine, etc. In addition, additives such as MSG, have been implicated as well as the chemical, sodium nitrite, which is used in preserving hot dogs, etc.

DISCOVERING ADVERSE REACTIONS TO FOODS

Allergies and intolerances to foods can cause a wide variety of symptoms. Avoidance of problem foods is the best way to control the symptoms, since food allergy shots have not proven to be effective. First, the problem foods need to be identified, which is done by an elimination diet limited.

To get the greatest relief of symptoms, the problem food or foods should be avoided in all forms. Below is a list of foods and their derivatives that commonly cause problems, but this is by no means a complete list. These foods are fairly simple to eliminate from your diet. If after eliminating a food your symptoms disappear, this food may be a problem for you. This will be determined when we reintroduce the food to your diet to see if your symptoms return. If you have difficulty eliminating these foods from your diet or continue to have symptoms after these foods are eliminated, you may want to see a dietician. They will help you by doing a complete dietary evaluation and then planning the appropriate diet for you.

FOODS THAT COMMONLY CAUSE ADVERSE REACTIONS OR "ALLERGIES"

MILK: (May also be listed on labels as casein, lactalbumin, sodium caseinate or whey);
Common sources: all types of milk, ice cream, yogurt, cheeses and puddings.

TREE NUTS

PEANUTS AND PEANUT BUTTER: Peanuts are in the same family as peas and beans. They are not a true "nut".

PEAS AND BEANS

CITRUS FRUITS: oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruit and tangerines.

EGGS: (May also be listed on labels as albumin or ovalbumin)

FISH AND SHELLFISH

CHOCOLATE, COCOA AND COLAS

OTHER COMMON OFFENDERS: WHEAT, CORN AND SOY: These are more difficult to eliminate so should be done with the help of a dietician.

FOODS THAT TYPICALLY DO NOT CAUSE HIVES OR WELTS

<u>Meats</u>	<u>Cereals*</u>	<u>Vegetables</u>	<u>Fruits</u>	<u>Beverages</u>
Lamb	Most OK	(fresh)	(and juices)	Soybean milk
Beef	Rice	Carrots	Pears	Spring water
Turkey	Rye	Squash	Peaches	Tea
Seasoning	Barley	Lettuce	Bananas	Coffee (except
Salt	Oats	Beets	Plums	in adults)
	Corn	Sweet Potatoes	Apples	Natural cran-
	Wheat	White Potatoes		berry juice
	(But avoid			Grape juice
	baked goods with			(Welch's)
	preservatives)			

*Use juice from fruit on cereal

FOODS THAT TYPICALLY CAUSE HIVES OR WELTS

Most common

Chocolate	Alcohol (in medicines)	Mint
Eggs	Beans	Mustard
Fish	Cheese	Pickles
Fresh fruit (berries)	Citrus fruits	Pop (cola)
Milk	Coloring (esp. red or purple)	Preservatives
Nuts	Corn	(benzoic acid)
Peas	Gum	Saccharin
Pork	Licorice	Seasonings
Shellfish	Mayonnaise	Spices
Tomato products	Meat sauces (soy)	Vegetables (fresh)
	Menthol	Wheat
		Sprayed vegetables
		Or fruits (unless
		Well scrubbed)

ADDITIONAL ITEMS THAT SHOULD BE MINIMIZED IF YOU HAVE HIVES OR WELTS

Mouthwash	Body lotions	New clothing
Toothpaste	Nail polish	(wash it first!)
(use salt or soda)	Insect sprays	Tonics**
All hair or eye items	Aerosol sprays	Vitamins**
All body powders	Unusual contacts-plastic	Pills**
Body creams	(plastic dried plants)	

MEDICATIONS OR INFECTIONS

**Discuss all medications with your physician to decide if you should continue to use them or if substitute drugs can be used. Any medicine, which contains aspirin (acetylsalicylic acid) or penicillin, in particular can cause hives. On rare occasions hives are caused by tonsil, sinus, bladder, or tooth infections.

ADVERSE REACTIONS TO FOOD ADDITIVES

If you had to guess how many additives were commonly used in food today, what would you guess? A dozen? Fifty? Maybe 100 at the most?

Would you believe anywhere from 2,000 or more? That's right. Preservatives, conditioners, flavorings, colorants, sweeteners and the like are added to the food we eat every day.

What is even more startling, is that out of these thousands, surprisingly few have been reported to cause adverse reactions when ingested, and then only in some susceptible people.

Food Additives Commonly Thought to Cause Adverse Reactions

Additive Name	Purpose
Aspartame	Sweetener
Benzoates	Preservatives
BHA, BHT	Antidetoxydants
FD&C Dyes	Colorants
MSG	Flavoring
Nitrates/Nitrites	Preservatives
Parabens	Preservatives
Sulfites	Preservatives

Here's a closer look at the additives that cause adverse reactions, the foods and beverages they are commonly found in, and the reactions they have been reported to induce. It should be noted that not all reported reactions have been verified scientifically.

ASPARTAME - More widely known by its brand name, Nutrasweet, this low-calorie sweetener is found in many foods and beverages in place of sugar.

Recent studies suggest that aspartame can cause angioedema, or swelling of the eyelids, lips, hands, or feet in those who are sensitive to it. However, the incidence of these symptoms is extremely rare, and research in this area is continuing.

BENZOATES – Benzoates are used as a food preservative and in the processing of certain foods, including bananas, cake, cereal, chocolate, dressings, fats, licorice, margarine, mayonnaise,

powdered milk, oils, powdered potatoes, and dry yeast. True allergic reactions are extremely rare.

BHA/BHT – BHA (butylated hydroxyanisole) and BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene) are antioxidants, or agents that prevent oxygen absorption.

BHA and BHT are used mainly in foods containing fats and oils, primarily in cereal and other grain products.

BHA and BHT can cause hives and other skin reactions in people who are sensitive to them, although true allergic reactions are rare.

FD&C DYES – The Food, Drug & Cosmetic Act of 1938 gave rise to the term FD&C (food dye & coloring). This Act approved a variety of dyes used in foods and beverages. They are identified on labels by color and number, such as FD&C Yellow No. 5 (Tartrazine) or FD&C Red No. 3.

Some foods that may contain tartrazine include: cake mixes, candies, canned vegetables, cheese, chewing gum, hot dogs, ice cream, orange drinks, salad dressings, seasoning salts, soft drinks and catsup. Newer studies indicate that FD&C Yellow No. 5 causes hives, urticaria, or asthma attacks only very rarely in those who are sensitive to the agent.

MSG – Monosodium glutamate is best known for its role in Chinese, Japanese and Southeast Asian cooking, which is why MSG reactions are sometimes called the “Chinese Restaurant Syndrome.”

However, this association is misleading, because MSG is used not only in Oriental foods, but also by many different manufacturers and restaurants as a flavor enhancer for a variety of foods.

Reactions to this agent reportedly include headache, nausea, diarrhea, sweating, chest tightness, and a

burning sensation along the back of the neck. Such reactions appear to require the consumption of large amounts of MSG. Reportedly, asthmatics that have consumed MSG have more severe asthma attacks, although this remains an area of continuing research. Asthmatic reactions to MSG are extremely rare.

NITRATES/NITRITES – These two agents are widely used as preservatives, though they also serve as flavor enhancers and colorants. Nitrates and nitrites are primarily found in processed meats such as hot dogs, bologna and salami.

Nitrates and nitrites may cause headaches and possibly hives in some individuals.

PARABENS – Parabens are preservatives used in food and drugs. Examples of these agents include methyl, ethyl, propyl, butyl parabens and sodium benzoate. When ingested by individuals who are sensitive to them, parabens have been shown to cause severe dermatitis or have been shown to cause dermatitis or redness, swelling, itching, and pain of the skin.

SULFITES – Also called SO₂, sulfating agents such as sulfur dioxide, sodium or potassium sulfite, bisulfite, and metabisulfite are used to preserve foods and sanitize containers for fermented beverages. Sulfites can be found in many foods, including baked goods, teas, condiments and relishes, processed seafood products, jams, and jellies, dried fruit, fruit juices, canned and dehydrated vegetables, frozen and dehydrated potatoes, and soup mixes. They also are found in some beverages, such as beer, wine, wine coolers, and hard cider.

Sulfites may cause reactions such as chest tightness, hives, abdominal cramps, diarrhea, lowered blood pressure, lightheadedness, weakness and an elevated pulse rate. Sulfites also may trigger asthma attacks in sulfite-sensitive asthmatics.

Until recently, the highest levels of sulfites were found in restaurant salad bars. But in 1986, the Food and Drug Administration banned their use on fruits and vegetables intended to be sold or served raw

because of the growing rate of sulfite reaction incidences. The FDA in 1987 also ordered that packaged foods be labeled when they contain more than 10 parts per million of any sulfating agent, so

sulfite-sensitive individuals may identify which packaged foods they should avoid.

Managing Food Additive Sensitivity

The best way to handle food additive sensitivity is to know which foods contain certain additives, and to avoid those additives that cause problems for you. Your allergist can help you identify those food items responsible for your symptoms and eliminate them, as much as possible, from your diet.

DAILY FOOD DIARY

MON ___/___/___	TUES ___/___/___	WED ___/___/___	THURS ___/___/___	FRI ___/___/___	SAT ___/___/___	SUN ___/___/___
Breakfast						
Symptom						
Medication						
luncheon						
Symptom						
Medication						
Dinner						
Symptom						
Medication						

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Dinner						
Symptom						
Medication						