



Drug Allergy



Overview

This is a bad reaction you have to a medication. It may happen the first time you take a drug. But it can even happen with a drug you've taken before without issue.

Causes

What causes an allergic reaction? It happens when your immune system overreacts to something that should be harmless. In this case, some part of the drug is triggering your immune system to attack.

Drugs to watch for

The drug that causes the most allergic reactions is penicillin. It's an antibiotic. Other antibiotics, especially those that contain sulfa, can cause allergic reactions, too. Non-steroidal drugs like aspirin and ibuprofen can cause reactions. So can contrast dye and chemotherapy drugs. And, some people have a bad reaction to anticonvulsants.

Symptoms

What are the symptoms? If your reaction is mild, it may include things like congestion and itchy eyes. Your skin may itch. You may have a rash or hives. Your mouth and throat may swell. If you have a severe reaction, you can have breathing problems and a drop in blood pressure. You may feel dizzy, and you may faint. Your skin may turn a bluish color. A severe reaction is called "anaphylaxis." It's a medical emergency.

Treatment

How do we treat a drug allergy? If you're having anaphylaxis, get medical help right away. If you have less severe symptoms, we can treat them with other drugs. And, you'll need to make sure you avoid the drug that you're allergic to in the future. Your doctor will create a plan that's right for you.