



## Hives



### Overview

These are red, raised areas that form on the skin. They're often itchy. Hives can range in size from small to large, and they can develop anywhere on your body.

### Causes

What causes hives? Most often, they come from an allergic reaction. That's when your immune system overreacts to something that shouldn't be harmful to you. Foods, medicines, insect stings and other allergens can all cause hives to develop. Hives result from other triggers, too. Viral infections, hormone changes and autoimmune conditions can all cause them. And sometimes, we don't know the cause.

### Symptoms

What are the symptoms? You'll have red, raised areas on your skin. They can be itchy and uncomfortable. If your hives are caused by an allergic reaction, you may have other symptoms, too. A severe allergic reaction could lead to things like swelling of the tongue and throat, breathing problems and a drop in blood pressure. We call this "anaphylaxis." It's an emergency. Get medical help as soon as possible.

### Treatment

How do we treat hives? Often, they go away on their own in a few days or weeks. You may benefit from things like creams, cold compresses, allergy medications and loose clothing. If those don't work, your doctor may recommend steroids or some other option. Your doctor will create a plan that's right for you.

