

Idaho Falls Pediatrics

Drug Allergic Rashes/Hives

What are drug rashes?

Most rashes that are caused by an allergic reaction to a drug appear as hives or are very itchy. Hives are raised red/pink patches that itch. Their size, shape, and location change frequently. Some less common rashes caused by drug allergies are widespread red patches or target-shaped rashes.

A rash caused by an allergic reaction appears on most of the body. A rash that affects just one part of the body is not caused by drugs.

Another kind of rash may occur when a child is taking amoxicillin. It is called a toxic rash. It consists of small faint pink spots, mainly on the chest, abdomen, and back. The rash is not caused by an allergic reaction to the medicine. A child who has such a rash can continue taking the medicine.

Usually a rash that develops while a child is taking a medication is caused by a virus and is unrelated to the medicine. Examples of viral illnesses that cause rashes are roseola, measles, and many summertime viruses that also cause diarrhea.

How can I take care of my child?

- **Stopping the medication**

If your child is diagnosed as being allergic to a medicine, he can never take any drugs in that drug category again. (For example, if he is allergic to one type of penicillin, he cannot take any of the penicillin drugs.) Hence, this is a critical decision. Speak with a health care provider before stopping any medication. However, there are a few exceptions.

Stop the drug if:

- Your child has a severe rash AND is taking antiseizure or sulfa drugs.
- You are certain your child has hives.

- **Replacing the antibiotic**

Anytime antibiotics are discontinued before a child has completed the full treatment, a doctor should see the child within 24 hours to determine whether he or she needs a new antibiotic. Without this precaution, many children will have flare-ups of partially treated infections.

When should I call Idaho Falls Pediatrics?

Call IMMEDIATELY if:

- Your child has hives or is very itchy.
- The rash is severe.
- The rash is purple or blood-colored spots or dots.
- Your child is acting very sick.

Call within 24 hours about:

- All children with mild widespread rashes that occur while they are taking a medicine.

*NOTE: This information is provided as a public educational service. The information does not replace any of the instructions your physician gives you. If you have a medical emergency please call 911 or call the Hospital at (208) 529-6111. If you have questions about your child's care, please call Idaho Falls Pediatrics at (208) 522-4600.