

Allergy Consultants, P.A.

Specialists in Pediatric and Adult Allergy, Asthma, and Sinus Disease

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HIVES

Your diagnosis is hives – the medical word is URTICARIA.

The three most important things you should know:

1. **Hives are very common** – approximately one out of three persons will develop hives in a lifetime. Women have hives more frequently than men so there can be hormonal influences. This office sees usually 3-6 cases of hives every day.
2. Although we know you were referred here by your physician because he is very concerned about your hives, and we know that you are here because you are very concerned about your hives, and for sure, we will take your hives seriously, in the scheme of a medical lifetime, **hives are not considered to be a serious disease!**
3. Some of our patients have had hives for a time prior to their appointment, and it seems like they will never go away, with only very rare exceptions, **hives are temporary!**
 - In acute hives, most cases resolve in “days”.
 - 50% of chronic hives resolve in 3-12 months
 - 20% of chronic hives resolve in 12-36 months
 - 20% of chronic hives resolve in 36-60 months
 - 1.5% of chronic hives can persist for years.

No matter the duration, we will stay with you until your hives disappear, and keep you comfortable during that time.

The Allergist is the appropriate physician who deals with hives. This does not mean that Allergy is always the cause of hives. We will be detectives in trying to find a cause, but truly, **most cases of chronic hives do not have an identifiable cause**, but result from a “twitchy Mast Cell”, that releases excess histamine. This is called **Chronic Idiopathic Urticaria**.

Possible causes of hives:

1. Viral infection: Just a mild cold can trigger the mast cell to cause the hives. Then, the histamine can remain high for a time.
2. Allergy: This can be a food or a medication or a sting. Most allergic hives come within 10 minutes of the exposure, and are gone within hours. Allergy tests are not as important as history to make this diagnosis, and tests are done only for confirmation.
3. Disease: This is quite rare, but in selected patients, we will order some screening blood tests to rule/out disease. **In most patients, this is not necessary and only adds to the expense.**
4. Idiopathic – this is the most common cause of chronic hives, and can be on an “auto-immune” basis; that is, something changed inside your body to make your mast cell “twitchy” and it then releases excess histamine.

Aggravating factors

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