



University of North Carolina Wilmington
Abrons Student Health Center

INSTRUCTION SHEET: MILD ALLERGIC REACTION

The Student Health Provider has diagnosed a mild allergic reaction.

Something you have come into contact with has caused your body to react. Often, it is difficult to determine with certainty what caused the allergic reaction. Common causes are: new medicines (prescription or over-the-counter), foods, new cosmetics, detergents, shampoos, etc.

Treatment of the allergic reaction is fairly standard, whatever the cause. Determining the cause (and thus preventing future reactions) can take some investigation.

Common symptoms of a mild allergic reaction include: rash, red skin, intense itching, feeling restless or nervous. At present, you are not showing signs of a severe allergic reaction, such as shock (low blood pressure) or breathing difficulty.

MEASURES YOU SHOULD TAKE TO HELP TREAT YOUR ALLERGIC REACTION:

1. Rest at home. Take plenty of fluids.
2. Take over-the-counter antihistamines: In the morning, take a non-sedating antihistamine such as loratadine, 10 mg daily. At night, take diphenhydramine (Benadryl), 25 mg, 1 or 2 every 6 hours for itching and rash.
3. The main side effect of diphenhydramine is drowsiness, so do not drive, operate machinery, climb a ladder, etc., while taking the medicine. Stop taking the antihistamines when the itching and rash are gone.
4. Write down everything you ate, contacted, were exposed to, etc., in the 12 to 24 hours prior to the first onset of symptoms. Keep the list with your medical records. If similar symptoms occur in the future, make another list. By comparing the lists, you may identify the cause of the allergic reaction. For example, if you took the same medication, or ate peanut butter both times, you likely have identified the offending substance.
5. If your symptoms continue, make a prompt appointment with your personal/referral doctor or return to Student Health. Continuing symptoms require further treatment and investigation of the cause. Testing for specific allergies may be necessary.
6. Should you develop any symptoms of *severe* allergic reaction (chances are small), call 911/ proceed *immediately* to the nearest emergency department. Specifically, seek attention if you develop difficulty breathing (wheezing, noise on breathing in) or become shocky (pale, sweating, fainting, lightheaded, confused, etc.).