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PATIENT EDUCATION HANDOUTS

Hives (Urticaria)

DESCRIPTION

- A very itchy rash
- Raised pink spots with pale centers ranging in size from 1/2 inch to several inches wide (hives often look like mosquito bites)
- Quite variable shapes
- Rapid and repeated change in location, size, and shape.
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CAUSE

Hives are an allergic reaction to a food, medicine, viral infection, insect bite, and many other substances. Usually the cause is not found. Hives are not contagious.

EXPECTED COURSE

More than 10% of children get hives. Most children who develop hives have it only once. The hives come and go for 3 or 4 days and then mysteriously disappear.

HOME TREATMENT

Antihistamine medicine

The best drug for hives is an antihistamine. An antihistamine won't cure the hives, but it will reduce their number and relieve itching.

Benadryl, one of the most commonly used drugs for hives, is available without prescription.

The main side effect of this drug is drowsiness. If you have another antihistamine (for example, any drug for hay fever) at home, use it until you can get some Benadryl. When you give Benadryl, give it four times a day in the following doses:

	Child's Weight in pounds					
	20	40	60	80	100	120
Liquid	3 ml	6 ml	10 ml	13 ml	16 ml	20 ml
Tablets	-	-	1	1	1 ½	2

Note: Benadryl liquid concentration is 12.5 mg/5 ml, Benadryl tablets are 25 mg tablets.

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Your child's medication is _____. Give _____ every _____ hours.

Continue the medicine until the hives are completely gone for 24 hours.

1. Other aspects of treatment

A cool bath will also make your child feel better. In the meantime, avoid anything you think might have brought on the hives. For hives triggered by pollen or animal dander, take a shower.

2. Common mistakes in the treatment of hives

Many parents wait to give the antihistamine until new hives have appeared. This means your child will become itchy again. The purpose of the medicine is to keep your child comfortable until the hives go away. Therefore, give the medicine regularly until you are sure the hives are completely gone.

Hives are not contagious and your child can be with other children.

CALL YOUR CHILD'S PHYSICIAN IMMEDIATELY IF:

(1-888-838-1303 after hours)

- Breathing or swallowing becomes difficult.
- Your child starts acting very sick.
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CALL YOUR CHILD'S PHYSICIAN DURING OFFICE HOURS IF:

(772-2778 during duty hours)

- Most of the itch is not relieved after your child has been taking an antihistamine for 24 hours.
- Most of the itch is not relieved after 24 hours on continuous Benadryl.
- The hives last more than 1 week.
- You have other concerns or questions.

Adapted from: Adapted from Barton Schmitt's *Pediatric Advisor* Feb, 00

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