

# Hives

## What it is?

Hives, also called urticaria, consist of a pink or reddish rash with raised bumps (welts) and pale centers. The rash is usually itchy but should not be painful. Hives can be transient, usually appearing and enlarging over minutes to hours and disappearing (and sometimes reappearing) within 24 hours. They can be worse at night and disrupt school and/or sleep.

### Hives Photos



## Cause

Hives can have many causes. Most often in the pediatric population ( 80% of the time), hives develop during or after an infection (bacterial or viral) and typically last 3-4 days. Other causes of local or widespread hives can be an allergic reaction to food, medication, or an insect bite/sting. Other causes of localized hives are direct skin contact with an irritant such as pet saliva, plants, or pollen.

## Treatment

In most cases hives will resolve on their own and do not need treatment. If there is a known factor causing hives, you will want to avoid it in the future.

The following may help with itching:

1. Over the counter antihistamine like Zyrtec or Benadryl (see table below)
2. Sitting in a cool bath or rubbing a cold cloth on very itchy spots for 10 minutes
3. Occasionally, an oral steroid may be prescribed in cases of severe hives.

Like all rashes, hives will appear redder when the body is warm (during/after a bath), upon waking up when wearing warm clothes to bed, when bundled up in blanket, with fever, and after playing outside. This is not concerning and should lessen as the body cools off.

Name	Strengths	Dose	
<b>Zyrtec (cetirizine)</b>  Can be sedating in 10% of people	Dissolve Tab: 10 mg Liquid: 1 mg/mL Swallow: 10 mg	TIMING: EVERY 12-24 HOURS	
		6-12 months: 2.5 mg (2.5 mL liquid) 12 months- 5 years: 2.5 to 5mg (2.5-5mL liquid) 6 and older: 5 to 10 mg (5-10 mL liquid or 1 of 10 mg dissolve tab or swallow tab)	
<b>Benadryl (diphenhydramine)</b>  **Sedating in most people	Liquid: 12.5 mg/5mL Child chewable: 12.5 mg Adult tablet: 25 mg	TIMING: EVERY 6-8 HOURS or JUST BEFORE BED (due to sleepiness)	
		17-21 lbs: 3.75 mL 22-32 lbs: 5 mL or 1 chewable 33-42 lbs: 7.5 mL or 1.5 chewable 43-53 lbs: 10 mL or 2 chewable	54-64 lbs: 12.5 mL or 2.5 chewable 65-75 lbs: 15 mL or 3 chewable 76-86 lbs: 17.5 mL or 3.5 chewable >86 lbs: 20 mL or 4 chewable

\*\*Though Benadryl typically causes sleepiness, it can have the opposite effect in some children. For this reason, avoid trying Benadryl for the first time before bed. Also, you can try starting with ½ of the recommended dose above.\*\*

## Return to School

Hives are not contagious to others. Children can go to school once the feel better. The hives shouldn't keep children from normal activities. If the cause of hives is due to infection, your child can go back to school after they are fever free for 24 hours.

## When to call

- Itching is not better after 24 hours on allergy medication.
- Hives last more than 1-week.
- Severe hives are not improving after two doses of antihistamine medication.
- If you believe your child needs to be seen.
- If worsening symptoms begin such as fever, joint pain, or bruise-like coloration of the hives
- **Call 911 if hives are accompanied by any of these: trouble breathing, wheezing, swelling around mouth, vomiting, or trouble swallowing.**