

Treatment

continued

These medications decrease inflammation in the body.

- **Epinephrine** –a medicine called epinephrine may be given as a injection to provide rapid relief of acute, severe hives or when the child is having problems breathing.

For hives possibly caused by pollens, animal contact or playing in grass or weeds, give your child a shower or bath. Wash all clothing that was worn at contact time. Very itchy areas can be rubbed with an ice cube for 10 minutes.

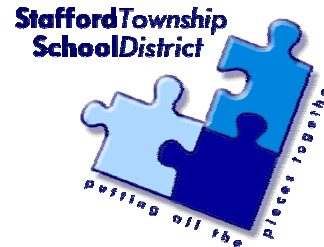
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Wellness Series

Keeping students healthy,
fit and eager to learn

Hives (Urticaria)



For additional information contact your school nurse at 609-978-5700

Primary Learning Center x1276
Ocean Acres x1113
Oxycocus x1073
McKinley Avenue x1140
Intermediate x1074
District Nurse Coordinator x 1205





Hives (Urticaria)

Hives, or Urticaria, are raised swellings of the skin or mucous membranes. The raised swelling is called a wheal, and is nicknamed a “welt.” A red ring surrounds the wheal. This is called the flare. The size of each hive may vary greatly, from a tiny spot to a swollen, red area several inches in diameter. The hives may cover just one small area. Sometimes the hives bunch together making large areas of the body appear red. In infants and young children, hives may cause swelling of the arms and legs. Hives may come, go, and then come back again on another area of the body. Hives can be very itchy. Most hives occur suddenly and then go away completely.



Hives are usually not serious and go away with minimal treatment. Sometimes, the reaction may be more severe. If there is swelling in the upper respiratory tract, there may be difficulty breathing or wheezing. This is a **life-threatening reaction** and requires emergency medical attention.

What causes Hives?

The most common cause for hives is an allergic reaction to foods or medication. Other causes are reactions to infections, immunizations, insect bites or inhaled allergens. Heat, cold or stress may cause hives. In some children, pressure on the skin, sunlight or sweating during exercise can cause hives. The exact cause of hives cannot be identified in most children. Writing down everything that was eaten (food, liquids, medicines, candy, etc.) in the past 24-48 hours may help identify a cause if the hives should come back at another time.



How long do Hives last?

A single hive rarely lasts more than 12-48 hours. Hives that occur due to a food or drug reaction generally last a few days to several weeks. Some chil-

dren have chronic hives, which means the hives have lasted for more than six weeks. Chronic hives may occur on and off from several months to several years. Hives caused by viral illnesses normally come and go for 3-4 days, then disappear.

What is the treatment for Hives?

Treatment is more effective if the cause of the hives is identified and then eliminated. Treatment may include:

- **Antihistamines** - antihistamines such as Benadryl® relieve the hives and itching for most children. To prevent the return of hives, antihistamines are often continued for 1-2 weeks after the hives are gone. Be aware however, that many children feel sleepy when they take antihistamines.
- **Corticosteroids** –For patients who do not respond to antihistamine treatments, the doctor may prescribe a type of medicine called a corticosteroid.