



A Brief Note on Drug Allergies

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DESCRIPTION

Each and every drug has side effects, from aspirin to the most sophisticated prescription drugs on the market. Many are minor, some are simply inconvenient, some are serious, and some are simply strange. Perhaps the most common side effects of drugs that work in your body are related to the gastrointestinal system. Almost all medications can cause nausea and upset stomach, but only in few kinds of people. Skin irritation is a common complaint of topical medications. To find more about a drug's side effects, look on the label of Over-The-Counter (OTC) The package insert or printed matter received with the product or prescription drug. The Package insert often contains a long list of options, so you can also talk to your pharmacist or doctor about what to expect and what to look out for.

Side effects are usually considered to be unwanted side effects that occur in addition to the desired therapeutic effects of one or more drugs. Side effects may vary from person to person, depending on the condition, age, weight, gender, ethnicity, and general health of the individual.

Side effects can occur when starting, reducing/increasing, or stopping the course of medication or medication.

Side effects can also lead to non-compliance with prescribed treatments. If the side effects of one or more drugs are severe, you can adjust the dose or prescribe a second drug. Lifestyle and dietary changes can also help minimize side effects.

SYMPTOMS OF DRUG ALLERGIES

You may not experience allergic symptoms when you first start taking the drug, but your body may be making antibodies to it. Therefore, the next time you take the drug, the immune system considers as antibodies and symptoms may appear when the body releases chemicals and fights back. These symptoms include:

- Rash or hives
- Itching
- Wheezing or other breathing problems
- Swelling
- vomiting
- Dizziness or lightheadedness

- Anaphylaxis, a potentially life-threatening reaction that affects breathing and can shock the body. The reaction can affect more than one organ system at the same time (eg. both rash and dyspnea).

Penicillin causes most drug allergic symptoms. Having allergic symptoms after taking penicillin does not mean that you are responding to related medications such as amoxicillin, but it is more likely. Also, a single reaction to penicillin (or another drug) does not mean that the same reaction will occur in the future. Antibiotics containing sulfa drugs such as Septra, Bactrim (sulfamethoxazole trimethoprim) and Pediazol (erythromycin sulfisoxazole) can cause allergic reactions. Non-antibiotics, including sulfa drugs, have a very low risk.

TYPES OF DRUG ALLERGIES

You may not experience allergic symptoms the first time you take a drug, but your body can develop an allergic reaction, which can cause any drug. This can range from itching and rashes to life-threatening anaphylactic reactions. Due to their chemical structure, some drugs cannot avoid causing side effects. The popular allergic drug diphenhydramine (also known as the Benadryl brand name) is one of them. It relieves allergic symptoms, but also blocks the chemical acetylcholine, which causes many other side effects, including drowsiness and dry mouth. Some drugs have side effects that are barely noticeable when given correctly. Warfarin (Kumadin, Jantoben), which is usually used to prevent blood clots, usually works well and is not annoying, but in the wrong situation, severe internal bleeding can occur.

COMMON TRIGGERS OF DRUG ALLERGIES

- Penicillin and related antibiotics
- Antibiotics containing sulfonamides (sulfa drugs)
- Anticonvulsant
- Aspirin, ibuprofen, and other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs)
- Chemotherapeutic drug

HOW DRUG ALLERGIES ARE TREATED?

The main concern in the treatment of drug allergies is to relieve symptoms.

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- Common symptoms such as rash, hives, and itching can often be controlled with antihistamines and, in some cases, corticosteroids.
- Bronchodilators (inhalers) may be prescribed for coughing and stuffy nose.
- For more severe anaphylactic symptoms (life-threatening reactions such as dyspnea and loss of consciousness), epinephrine (adrenaline) is usually injected. Desensitization is sometimes used to treat drug allergies, especially when tests are not available or feasible. This technology is designed to allow your body to withstand temporary allergen-causing drugs as long as you continue to take the drug. For example, during penicillin desensitization, small doses of penicillin are gradually and regularly injected in large doses until the immune

system learns to tolerate the drug. The desensitization procedure is not a cure for drug allergies.

PREVENTION

If you have a drug allergy, the best precaution is to avoid unpleasant drugs. Here are some steps you can take to protect yourself:

- Inform your medical staff that your drug allergies are clearly identified in your medical records. Notify other healthcare providers such as your dentist or professional.
- Wear a medical alert bracelet to identify drug allergies. This information can guarantee proper treatment in an emergency.