

## HIVES

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Hives occur when histamine is released from mast cells in the upper layer of skin. People who have hives release too much histamine.

### **EVALUATION:**

History and Physical Examination

Some hives only occur when the person is exposed to a trigger such as a medication or food. Usually a detailed history will reveal these triggers. Some patients have chronic hives which can be daily or episodic hives that occur without an identifiable trigger.

Blood tests

Usually screening blood tests are performed but rarely are helpful in determining the cause of the hives

### **PROGNOSIS:**

Most chronic hives go away with or without treatment

50% of patients resolve in 3-12 months

20% of patients resolve in 12-36 months

20% of patients resolve in 36-60 months

1.5% of patients can have hives for up to 25 years

60% of people will have a recurrence of chronic hives

### **AVOID THE FOLLOWING NONSPECIFIC TRIGGERS OF HIVES:**

1. berries (especially strawberries)
2. aspirin
3. nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory agents (NSAIDs) in OTC and prescription pain relievers
4. physical stimuli such as heat, vibration and ultraviolet light
5. alcoholic beverages

### **MANAGEMENT:**

Goal of therapy: keeping comfortable with/without some hives

Medications: maximal antihistamine therapy

Allegra 180 mg every morning

Zyrtec 10 mg every night

Other medications sometimes used:

Atarax (hydroxyzine) 25 mg. every 6 hours as needed

Doxepin (sinequan) 25 mg. every night

Prednisone (steroids) should be avoided

Caution these medications cause sedation

Discuss all medication changes with your physician

