
BENGALURU ALLERGY FOUNDATION

BEST FASHION QUALITY



NEWSLETTER

FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST

UNDERSTANDING DRUG ALLERGIES: A PATIENT GUIDE

Adverse reactions to medications are common in clinical practice, but not every reaction is a true drug allergy. Understanding how your body reacts to medications can help keep you safe and ensure you receive effective treatment

WHAT IS A DRUG ALLERGY?

Predictable vs. Unpredictable Reactions: About 80% of adverse drug reactions are predictable side effects or overdoses related to how a drug works. Drug allergies belong to the unpredictable group, occurring only in susceptible individuals.



Immune System Response: A true drug allergy happens when your immune system mistakenly identifies a medication as a harmful foreign invader, producing antibodies or immune cells against it.

Pseudoallergic Reactions: Some medications directly trigger the release of histamine without involving antibodies. While these reactions cause symptoms similar to an allergy (such as hives or flushing), they lack specific immune system triggers

COMMON SYMPTOMS TO WATCH FOR

The skin is the most common organ affected by medication allergies. Symptoms can appear within minutes or take several days to develop:

Hives and Swelling

(Urticaria/Angioedema) : Raised, itchy welts or deeper tissue swelling that often appear shortly after taking a medication:

Widespread Rashes

(Exanthems): Fine, red, raised spots that typically begin on the trunk and spread to the arms and legs over several days



Anaphylaxis : A rapid, severe, multi-organ allergic reaction that can involve breathing difficulties, throat swelling, dizziness, and sudden drops in blood pressure. This is a medical emergency requiring injectable epinephrine.

Severe Skin Reactions: Rare conditions such as Stevens-Johnson Syndrome (SJS) cause fever, mouth sores, and skin blistering or peeling days to weeks after drug exposure.

WHO IS AT HIGHER RISK?

Several patient- and drug-related factors influence the likelihood of developing a drug allergy:

Age and Gender: Drug allergies are seen more frequently in young and middle-aged adults, as well as in women.

Method of Administration: Medications applied topically to the skin or given intravenously (IV) carry a higher risk of triggering an allergic response than oral pills.

Frequent Dosing: High doses given repeatedly or over prolonged periods are more likely to lead to hypersensitivity than a single large dose.

Underlying Viral Infections: Certain active viral infections, such as HIV or Epstein-Barr virus (EBV), increase susceptibility to drug rashes.

HOW ARE DRUG ALLERGIES DIAGNOSED?

If a drug allergy is suspected, evaluation by an experienced allergist is recommended. Diagnostic tools include:

Detailed Medical History: Your doctor will review the specific medication, dosage, timeline of your symptoms, and any prior exposures.

Skin Testing: Skin prick or intradermal tests are highly reliable for evaluating immediate penicillin allergies by checking for specific antibodies.

Graded Challenges: When an allergy is uncertain, a specialist may administer small, gradually increasing doses of the drug under close medical supervision to see if it is tolerated.

IMPORTANT STEPS FOR PATIENT SAFETY

Key Takeaway: The primary strategy for managing a drug allergy is stopping or avoiding the offending medication and substituting it with a safe alternative.

Penicillin De-labeling: Up to 90% of people who believe they are allergic to penicillin actually tolerate it upon evaluation, as many outgrow the allergy over time. Removing an incorrect allergy label allows you to receive better, more targeted antibiotic treatments.

Update Your Records: Ensure all your doctors, dentists, and pharmacists are aware of your reaction history so it can be documented in your medical records.

Wear Medical Identification: Consider wearing a MedicAlert bracelet or necklace if you have a history of severe allergic reactions.

IMPORTANT STEPS FOR PATIENT SAFETY

Safe Decisions. Better Outcomes. Healthier Tomorrow.

Key Takeaway

The primary strategy for managing a drug allergy is stopping or avoiding the offending medication and substituting it with a safe alternative.



Penicillin De-labeling

Up to 90% of people who believe they are allergic to penicillin actually tolerate it upon evaluation, as many outgrow the allergy over time. Removing an incorrect allergy label allows you to receive better, more targeted antibiotic treatments.



Update Your Records

Ensure all your doctors, dentists, and pharmacists are aware of your reaction history so it can be documented in your medical records.



Wear Medical Identification

Consider wearing a MedicAlert bracelet or necklace if you have a history of severe allergic reactions.



Anaphylaxis Awareness

A rapid, severe, multi-organ allergic reaction that can involve breathing difficulties, throat swelling, dizziness, and sudden drops in blood pressure. This is a medical emergency requiring injectable epinephrine.





TROUBLE BREATHING



THROAT SWELLING



DIZZINESS



DROP IN BLOOD PRESSURE

✓ Your awareness today can prevent emergencies tomorrow. Stay informed. Stay safe. ❤️

ANGIOEDEMA: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

While most people are familiar with hives, angioedema is a related skin reaction that occurs in the deeper layers of skin tissue and mucous membranes. It often appears as sudden, localized swelling and can affect various parts of the body.

WHAT IS ANGIOEDEMA?

Angioedema occurs when small blood vessels temporarily leak fluid into surrounding deeper tissues. Unlike surface hives (urticaria), which cause raised, itchy welts on the top layer of skin, angioedema causes swelling beneath the surface

Commonly Affected Areas: Lips, eyelids, tongue, hands, feet, and genitals.

Duration: Episodes typically develop rapidly (within minutes to hours) and generally resolve over 24 to 72 hours.

Sensation: The swelling is often described as feeling painful, tight, or tender rather than itchy.



ANGIOEDEMA: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW



While most people are familiar with hives, angioedema is a related skin reaction that occurs in the deeper layers of skin tissue and mucous membranes. It often appears as sudden, localized swelling and can affect various parts of the body.

WHAT IS ANGIOEDEMA?

Angioedema occurs when small blood vessels temporarily leak fluid into surrounding deeper tissues. Unlike surface hives (urticaria), which cause raised, itchy welts on the top layer of skin, angioedema causes swelling beneath the surface.



HIVES (URTICARIA)
Swelling on the surface of the skin



ANGIOEDEMA
Swelling beneath the surface



Leakage of fluid from blood vessels causes swelling in deeper tissues.

COMMONLY AFFECTED AREAS



Lips Eyelids Tongue Hands Feet Genitals



DURATION

Episodes typically develop rapidly (within minutes to hours) and generally resolve over 24 to 72 hours.



SENSATION

The swelling is often described as feeling painful, tight, or tender rather than itchy.



IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

Angioedema can sometimes affect the tongue or throat and may cause breathing difficulties. **Seek immediate medical attention** if you experience these symptoms.



Swelling



Throat tightness



Trouble breathing



Seek help immediately

KEY CAUSES & TYPES

Angioedema can be triggered by several different mechanisms:

Allergic Angioedema: Triggered by immune system responses to foods (like nuts or shellfish), medications, latex, or insect stings. It frequently occurs alongside hives.

Medication-Induced (Non-Allergic): Certain prescription drugs, most notably ACE inhibitors (commonly used for high blood pressure), can cause swelling weeks, months, or even years after starting the medication.

Hereditary & Acquired Angioedema: Rare conditions caused by specific genetic variations or protein deficiencies (such as C1-inhibitor deficiency), leading to recurrent swelling without hives.

Idiopathic Angioedema: Cases where no specific cause or trigger can be identified.

WHEN IS IT A MEDICAL EMERGENCY?

While mild angioedema on a hand or foot is usually manageable, swelling involving the airways is a severe medical emergency.

 Call emergency services immediately (108) if swelling affects the tongue, throat, or inner airway, or if you experience:

- Difficulty breathing, wheezing, or a choking feeling
- Tightness in the throat or difficulty swallowing
- Dizziness, confusion, or sudden lightheadedness

DIAGNOSIS AND MANAGEMENT



If you experience unexplained or recurring swelling:

Seek Medical Evaluation: A doctor or allergist can help identify underlying triggers through allergy testing or blood work.

Medications: Allergic flare-ups are commonly managed with antihistamines or oral corticosteroids. Hereditary forms require specialized targeted therapies.

Avoid Triggers: If a medication or food is identified as the cause, strict avoidance is key. Never discontinue a prescribed drug without consulting your physician first.

VASOVAGAL EPISODES

A vasovagal episode—also known as vasovagal syncope or neurocardiogenic syncope—is the most common cause of fainting. It occurs when a temporary glitch in your autonomic nervous system causes your heart rate to slow down and your blood vessels to dilate. This leads to a sudden drop in blood pressure, reducing blood flow to the brain and causing a brief loss of consciousness.

Key Triggers

Vasovagal episodes are typically triggered by specific physical or emotional events:

Physical Strain: Standing for long periods (especially in heat), dehydration, or straining during a bowel movement.

Emotional Stress: Intense fear, anxiety, severe pain, or panic attacks.

Medical Exposure: The sight of blood, needles, or medical procedures.

Warning Signs & Symptoms

Most people experience clear warning signs (prodrome) a few seconds to minutes before passing out:

- Lightheadedness, dizziness, or weakness.
- Cold, clammy sweats or sudden feelings of warmth.
- Pale skin and nausea.
- Visual changes, such as blurred vision or "tunnel vision".

WHAT TO DO DURING AN EPISODE

If you feel faint: Lie down immediately and elevate your legs, or sit down and place your head between your knees. Tensing your leg and arm muscles can also help pump blood back toward your heart and brain to prevent fainting.

Management & When to Seek Help

While vasovagal syncope itself is generally harmless, the primary risk comes from fall injuries. Management involves staying well-hydrated, avoiding known triggers, and taking your time when standing up.

Consult a doctor if you faint for the first time, experience frequent episodes, or if fainting is accompanied by chest pain, shortness of breath, or confusion.



ABOUT BAF

BENGALURU ALLERGY FOUNDATION (BAF) IS A CHARITABLE TRUST TO ENHANCE QUALITY OF LIFE IN PEOPLE WITH ALLERGY! IT WAS SET UP IN THE YEAR 2017, AS AN OFFSHOOT OF BANGALORE ALLERGY CENTRE IN A BID TO GIVE BACK TO THE SOCIETY IN WHATEVER WAY POSSIBLE.



TO SERVE HUMANITY FOR ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE (QOL) BY MEANS OF ALLERGY AWARENESS PROGRAMS GLOBALLY.



TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR PEOPLE WITH ALLERGIC DISEASES THROUGH EDUCATION, ADVOCACY AND RESEARCH.

BAF organizes various public welfare activities, to name a few: Asthma camps, Patient Support Group Meetings, Counselling to Allergy patients, Inhaler Bank, Award ceremonies to recognize the professionals for their scientific and clinical contributions in the field of Allergy.

TRUSTEES



DR NAGENDRA PRASAD KOMARLA
CONSULTANT ALLERGIST,
BENGALURU ALLERGY CENTRE



DR PARANJOTHY KANNI
HE SERVES AS RESEARCH
DIRECTOR AT BAF
ACADEMY, BENGALURU.
PRINCIPAL SCIENTIST &
SENIOR PHARMACIST, BAC
PHARMACY



DR. PUNEET K NAGENDRA
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR,
RESPIRATORY MEDICINE,
CDSIMER



MRS. SUDHA NAGENDRA
SENIOR COUNSELLOR &
PSYCHOTHERAPIST.
SHE IS ASSOCIATED WITH SUGAMYA
ACADEMY FOR COUNSELLING, BENGALURU.
SHE IS ALSO PRESIDENT OF SWAMI
VIVEKANANDA SHIKSHANIK SAMSTHE,
BENGALURU.



MR. GOPINATH K S
DEPUTY GENERAL MANAGER AT HCL
TECH (BANGALORE), LEADING
TELECOM BSS DELIVERY IN THE ASIA
PACIFIC REGION, WITH OVER 30
YEARS OF IT EXPERIENCE AND
EDUCATION INCLUDING AN MS AND
IIM CERTIFICATE.



MR. SATYANARAYANA KASI:
SEASONED BANKER
SERVED VIJAYA BANK FOR OVER
FOUR DECADES, LEADING
OPERATIONS AND TECHNOLOGY,
AND HOLDS CREDENTIALS FROM
ICMAI AND CAIIB.



MRS. RAKI K NAGENDRA
ADMIN - BAC
SOCIAL WORK

SOCIAL WORK
SOCIAL WORK