

Hives: Patient Action Plan

1. IDENTIFY YOUR DIAGNOSIS AND TRIGGERS

Hives last 6 weeks or less: <input type="checkbox"/> ACUTE	Hives last longer than 6 weeks: <input type="checkbox"/> CHRONIC
Symptoms caused or worsened by triggers (e.g., medication, food allergy, infection, stress, contact (latex, pollen, animal, etc.), insect venom): <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> INDUCIBLE <input type="radio"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> SPONTANEOUS	Symptoms caused or worsened by triggers (e.g., scratching, pressure, vibration, heat, cold, water, exercise, UV light/sunlight): <input type="radio"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> INDUCIBLE <input type="radio"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> SPONTANEOUS

2. MANAGE YOUR SYMPTOMS

Avoid alcohol and triggers that consistently bring about or worsen your rash (e.g., non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs: ibuprofen, naproxen, diclofenac, etc.), aspirin, stress, exercise).

Take non-sedating antihistamines as directed. Options for adults:

Generic	Brand	1x Dose	4x Dose (max)
Cetirizine*	Reactine*	10 mg (OTC 1 tab, Rx 0.5 tab)	40 mg (OTC 4 tabs, Rx 2 tabs)
Desloratadine	Aerius	5 mg (1 tab)	20 mg (4 tabs)
Fexofenadine	Allegra	120 mg (1 tab)	480 mg (4 tabs)
Loratadine	Claritin	10 mg (1 tab)	40 mg (4 tabs)
Bilastine	Blexten	20 mg (1 tab)	80 mg (4 tabs)
Rupatadine	Rupall	10 mg (1 tab)	40 mg (4 tabs)

* One tablet of prescribed Cetirizine is 20 mg (which is 2x dose). Thus, max dose for prescribed Cetirizine is 2 tablets/day. Rx = prescribed by doctor, OTC = over the counter (no prescription).

3. MANAGE YOUR DOSE

Take non-sedating antihistamines until you have no symptoms for 3–6 weeks:

- Your starting dose (step 1) will depend on the severity of symptoms (circle one).
- If still symptomatic in 2 weeks: increase the dose — progress to the next step.
- Split daily doses (e.g., for 4x dose: take 2x dose in morning, 2x dose at night).

Starting symptom severity:	Mild	Moderate	Severe	Other (physician to fill)
Step 1	1x dose	2x dose	4x dose (max)	
Step 2	2x dose	4x dose (max)	*	
Step 3	4x dose (max)	*	*	

*** If your symptoms are ongoing despite max daily dose (4x dose):**

- Try a different antihistamine.
- If there is significant impairment to quality of life that outweighs the inherent risk of steroids, a short course of corticosteroid can be considered by your physician.
- Consider referral to allergist.

4. TAPER YOUR DOSE

After 3–6 weeks of no symptoms, you can try decreasing your antihistamines:

- Progress to the next step if you have no symptoms for 3–6 weeks.
- Choose a longer interval if your hives were more severe or if hives returned while tapering.
- If symptoms return while tapering, go back to the previous step in which you had no symptoms.

Dose at which you had no hives for 3–6 weeks:	1x Dose	2x Dose	3x Dose	4x Dose	Other (physician to fill)
Step 1	Stop	1x dose	2x dose	3x dose	
Step 2	—	Stop	1x dose	2x dose	
Step 3	—	—	Stop	1x dose	
Step 4	—	—	—	Stop	



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