

# Skeehchoosh

Pequot for Grasses, Herbs, Medicines

PEQUOT PHARMACEUTICAL NETWORK • PHARMACY NEWSLETTER

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## Drug Allergies

Drug allergies affect up to 20% of all hospitalized patients and up to 10% of the world's population. **However, only around one in ten reported side effects are actually drug allergies.** For example, some patients will report side effects, like nausea or upset stomach, as allergies. But these reactions aren't likely

Features Suggesting Allergy	Features Suggesting a Drug Side Effect, or Symptoms Unrelated to Drug
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Rash, urticaria, severe skin reaction, angioedema, bronchospasm, low blood pressure, or serum sickness suggests allergy.</li><li>Reaction was treated with epinephrine, oxygen, albuterol, and/or IV fluids (suggests anaphylaxis).</li><li>Symptoms reappeared after re-exposure to the same or similar drug.</li><li>Reaction occurred when the drug was started or restarted.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Headache, dizziness, drowsiness, or itching without rash</li><li>Isolated gastrointestinal symptoms</li><li>An underlying illness could explain symptoms (e.g., viral infection causing rash in patient receiving amoxicillin).</li><li>Patient had been taking the drug continuously, for a long time, when the reaction occurred.</li><li>Patient had similar symptoms when not taking the drug.</li></ul>

### What is a "true" drug allergy?

The immune system identifies certain drugs, foods, dyes, etc, to be threatening substances, or allergens, and mounts an attack against them.

Allergic reactions can occur as soon as a person is exposed to the allergen, or days after.

Reactions indicating a "true" drug allergy often include hives; rash; difficulty breathing, speaking, or swallowing; wheezing; or very low blood pressure.

A severe allergic reaction that includes these symptoms is sometimes referred to as "anaphylaxis" or an "anaphylactic reaction." Anaphylaxis can be deadly and requires immediate medical treatment, such as an injection of epinephrine and a trip to the emergency department. If anaphylaxis occurs, it's usually within five to 30 minutes of coming into contact with an allergen. Warning signs of anaphylaxis include swelling of the throat or other areas of the body, wheezing, chest tightness, passing out, trouble breathing or swallowing, and pale or red color to the face.

### Which drugs most commonly cause drug allergies?

Penicillin is the single most common drug allergy. Some other commonly reported drug allergies include the following: Aspirin; Opioids (e.g., codeine, hydrocodone, morphine); Other penicillins (e.g., amoxicillin, ampicillin); NSAIDs (e.g., ibuprofen, naproxen); Sulfa drugs (e.g., sulfamethoxazole [Septra, Bactrim DS], sulfadiazine)

### What nondrug allergies are important to consider in the pharmacy?

**Food allergies** can be an issue with a few drugs. The most common food allergies in kids include egg, milk, soy, wheat, peanut, and gelatin. In adults, they include shellfish, tree nuts, peanut, and fish. Drugs that have any traces or derivatives of a food allergen can be a problem for some patients.

**Dye allergies** are present in some individuals. Color additives can sometimes trigger allergic reactions leading to itching, rashes, and even anaphylaxis. Some of the more likely culprits are **FD&C Yellow No. 5 (tartrazine), Yellow No. 6, Yellow No. 10, Red No. 40, Blue No. 1, and Blue No. 2.**

**Preservative allergies** can be a problem in some cases. Sulfites may be added to drug products as a preservative, usually in injections and topicals. Sulfites can be a particular problem for patients with asthma or other lung disease, although it isn't clear why. Benzalkonium chloride, a preservative often used in eye drops, can cause issues for some patients. They may experience red, irritated eyes after exposure to this ingredient.

**Latex allergies** are estimated to occur in about 2% of the general population. The latex plant contains proteins that can be allergens in some people. These proteins are similar in structure to proteins found in other plants such as banana, avocado, chestnut, and kiwi plants. Patients with allergies to these foods may be more likely to have an allergy to latex. Latex in components of syringes or vial stoppers of injectable meds or vaccines may need to be considered when a patient has a latex allergy.

<https://pharmacist.therapeuticresearch.com/Content/Segments/PRL/2016/Dec/Drug-Allergies-10497>

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