

Contact Dermatitis

Contact dermatitis is an allergic reaction of the skin to soaps, dyes, cosmetics, perfumes, medicines, certain metals, and plants, such as poison ivy. The allergy can cause redness, swelling, and water-filled blisters. The skin may itch, sting, or burn, but the rash is not contagious. It usually appears 12 to 48 hours after contact and goes away in 7 to 10 days.

What To Do

1. Stay away from whatever caused the allergy, if you know what it is.
2. Take a cool bath or soak the area for 20 minutes, 5 to 6 times a day to help control the itching. Avoid warm baths.
3. Use calamine lotion between baths, if it's a mild case.
4. For mild to moderate cases, use hydrocortisone cream, such as CortAID.
5. Take an antihistamine such as Benadryl, especially at night, for the itching and to help you sleep. If you take an antihistamine, don't use a spray or cream on the rash. You could be getting too much of the same kind of medicine.
6. Wash clothes and other items that have come in contact with whatever caused the allergy.
7. Tell your doctor if you have a fever, if your eyes, mouth, or genitals swell, or if any sores are draining pus.

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