Allergic Reaction, Mild to Moderate

Allergies may happen from anything your body is sensitive to. This may be food, medications, pollens, chemicals, and nearly anything around you in everyday life that produces allergens. An allergen is anything that causes an allergy producing substance. Allergens cause your body to release allergic antibodies. Through a chain of events, they cause a release of *histamine* into the blood stream. Histamines are meant to protect you, but they also cause your discomfort. This is why anti-histamines are often used for allergies. Heredity is often a factor in causing allergic reactions. This means you may have some of the same allergies as your parents.

Allergies happen in all age groups. You may have some idea of what caused your reaction. There are many allergens around us. It may be difficult to know what caused your reaction. If this is a first time event, it may never happen again. Allergies cannot be cured but can be controlled with medications.

SYMPTOMS

You may get some or all of the following problems from allergies.

- Swelling and itching in and around the mouth.
- Tearing, itchy eyes.
- Nasal congestion and runny nose.
- Sneezing and coughing.
- An itchy red rash or hives.
- Vomiting or diarrhea.
- Difficulty breathing.

Seasonal allergies occur in all age groups. They are seasonal because they usually occur during the same season every year. They may be a reaction to molds, grass pollens, or tree pollens. Other causes of allergies are house dust mite allergens, pet dander and mold spores. These are just a common few of the thousands of allergens around us. All of the symptoms listed above happen when you come in contact with pollens and other allergens. Seasonal allergies are usually not life threatening. They are generally more of a nuisance that can often be handled using medications.

Hay fever is a combination of all or some of the above listed allergy problems. It may often be treated with simple over-the-counter medications such as diphenhydramine. Take medication as directed. Check with your caregiver or package insert for child dosages.

TREATMENT AND HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

If hives or rash are present:

- Take medications as directed.
- You may use an over-the-counter antihistamine (*diphenhydramine*) for hives and itching as needed. Do not drive or drink alcohol until medications used to treat the reaction have worn off. Antihistamines tend to make people sleepy.
- Apply cold cloths (*compresses*) to the skin or take baths in cool water. This will help itching. Avoid hot baths or showers. Heat will make a rash and itching worse.
- If your allergies persist and become more severe, and over the counter medications are not effective, there are many new medications your caretaker can prescribe. Immunotherapy or desensitizing injections can be used if all else fails. Follow up with your caregiver if problems continue.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- Your allergies are becoming progressively more troublesome.
- You suspect a food allergy. Symptoms generally happen within 30 minutes of eating a food.
- Your symptoms have not gone away within 2 days or are getting worse.
- You develop new symptoms.
- You want to retest yourself or your child with a food or drink you think causes an allergic reaction. **Never**

test yourself or your child of a suspected allergy without being under the watchful eye of your caregivers. A second exposure to an allergen may be life threatening.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF YOU DEVELOP:

- Difficulty breathing or wheezing, or have a tight feeling in your chest or throat.
- A swollen mouth, hives, swelling, or itching all over your body.
- A severe reaction with any of the above problems **should be considered life threatening.**

If you suddenly develop difficulty breathing call for local emergency medical help. THIS IS AN EMERGENCY.

MAKE SURE YOU:

- Understand these instructions.
- Will watch your condition.
- Will get help right away if you are not doing well or get worse.

Document Released: 10/14/2008 Document Re-Released: 01/09/2011
ExitCare® Patient Information ©2011 ExitCare, LLC.