Drug Allergy

Your caregiver has diagnosed you as having suffered from a drug allergy. Medications can cause allergic reactions. These reactions (skin rash, itching, and hives) cannot be given to other people. They disappear when you stop taking the drug. **Severe allergic reactions may be LIFE-THREATENING**. They can cause mouth swelling, difficulty breathing, pounding heart, faintness, and chest tightness (anaphylaxis).

HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

- Keep a list of your possible drug allergies.
- Do not take medications in the drug classes as directed by your caregiver.
- Talk with your caregiver before taking any drugs, including over-the-counter drugs.
- Always alert any new caregiver about your allergy. Don't assume the caregiver is aware of your allergy.
- After taking a new drug in your doctor's office, always wait there for at least 15 minutes.
- If you suffered from hives or a rash:
  - To lessen itching, apply cold compresses to the skin, or take a cool bath.
  - Do not take hot baths or showers. This will aggravate the itching and rash.
  - Wear loose fitting clothes.
- If you suffered a ***severe*** allergic reaction:
  - An adult will need to stay with you for 24 hours in case *symptoms* (problems) return.
  - You will need to wear a medic-alert bracelet or necklace stating the allergy.
  - You and your family need to learn when and how to use an anaphylaxis kit or epi-pen.
  - If you have had a severe reaction before, always carry your anaphylaxis kit with you. Other family members should also know how to administer this in an emergency.
- You may return to your normal activities when the allergic symptoms are gone.

SEEK MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You suspect a drug allergy. Symptoms may occur immediately to minutes later.
- Rash, hives, or itching occurs.
- You have new symptoms.

SEEK IMMEDIATE MEDICAL CARE IF:

- You have difficulty breathing, or you are wheezing or have a tight feeling it your chest or throat.
- You have a swollen mouth, or have hives, swelling or itching *all over* your body.
- You develop uncontrollable vomiting or diarrhea.

THIS IS AN EMERGENCY. Have someone drive you to the nearest Emergency Department or call 911.

MAKE SURE YOU:

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

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