

## What is a drug allergy?

A drug allergy occurs when your immune system overreacts to a medication and produces an allergic reaction.

## What are the signs and symptoms of drug allergy?

**Mild allergy:** hives, itchy skin rashes or localized swellings.

**Moderate allergy:** symptoms (e.g. hives, skin rashes) that spread to or involve the whole body, swelling of the face, lips or eyes.

**Severe allergy (Anaphylaxis):** rare but can be fatal. Symptoms generally appear within seconds or minutes after exposure to the medication and may include difficulty in breathing, wheeze or hoarse voice, difficulty in speech, swelling of the tongue or throat, rapid pulse, drop in blood pressure, fainting and loss of consciousness. Immediate medical attention is required.

Symptoms may occur within a few minutes to several days after taking the medication, depending on the dose and severity of reaction.

## What is a side effect?

A side effect refers to an unintended or undesired effect caused by a medication. In most cases, side effects tend to resolve naturally over time.

## Medication and allergy record

- Keep a list of your regular medications.
- Keep a detailed record (e.g. Drug Allergy Record Card) of any medications that have caused side effects. Include information about the type of reaction and its severity.
- Show your records with healthcare providers to ensure they are fully informed about your history of medications, allergies, and any side effects you have experienced.

This guidance is for reference only.

You should always follow your doctor's instructions.

Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you have any questions.

Do not share your medications with other people.

如有任何查詢，歡迎聯絡我們  
For enquiry, please feel free to contact us

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## General Advice for Medications

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## Storage of medications

- Store medications in a cool dry place. Some medications may require refrigeration and light protection.
- Keep medications away from children to prevent accidental ingestion.
- Store medications in their original containers or containers provided by Pharmacy.
- Store your medications separately from those of your family members to prevent any mix-ups or accidental usage.

## Do not take

- Expired medications.
- Degraded medications (change in color, taste, scent or clarity).
- Medications without instructions or prescribed for others.

## Disposal of medications

You may discard expired medications or medications that you no longer require as general household waste. Ensure they are securely kept out of sight and reach of children.

## Taking your medications

1. Wash your hands before and after taking your medications.
2. Follow the instructions from your doctor.
3. Do not share your medications with others.
4. If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember. If the next dose is due in less than half of the dosing interval, skip the dose and take your next dose as scheduled. Do not double the dose to make up for the missed dose.
5. When you travel, ensure you have enough medications to cover the entire trip, accounting for any unexpected delays. Carry your medications in your carry-on luggage to avoid loss or damage.

## Taking your medications with water

**Q: Why should we take medications with water?**

**A:** Water does not contain substances that can affect the absorption of medications.

**Q: What about other beverages?**

**A:** Milk contains magnesium and calcium, which can bind to certain medications, potentially reducing their absorption and effectiveness.

Tea and coffee, which contain caffeine, may raise blood pressure, especially when combined with decongestants commonly found in cold and flu medications. Other chemicals in tea also interact with specific medications.

Alcohol increases the side effects of a variety of medications.

Fizzy drinks and fruit juices may alter the absorption and effectiveness of various medications.

## Pregnancy, breastfeeding and medications

**Pregnancy or planning a pregnancy:** Some medications can affect the development of the fetus, while many are safe to use during pregnancy. Consult your doctor or pharmacist about your long-term medications when you are planning a pregnancy or when you start any medications during your pregnancy.

**Breastfeeding:** Some medications can transfer to a nursing baby through breast milk. In general, nursing mothers may take the medication immediately after breastfeeding or just before the child's longest sleep to minimize the infant's exposure to medication. Always consult your doctor or pharmacist to ensure safe breastfeeding practices if you are taking regular medications or starting a new one, as not all medications are suitable during this period.

If you are advised to temporarily stop breastfeeding, you may pump and discard the breastmilk as instructed to maintain the milk supply, so as to prevent duct blockage or mastitis (i.e. inflammation of the breast tissues). Resume breastfeeding after you stop taking the medicines.