

MCLA Health Services

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Self Care Sheet

Rash

Rash is a general term for any change in the color, texture or appearance of the skin. Rashes can be caused by many triggers including infection, chronic illness, stress, exercise and extreme heat or cold. Rashes can also be caused by contact with an irritant (like poison ivy), bug bites or an allergen (a substance that can irritate the skin and causes an allergic reaction or with a newly taken medication). A rash can appear suddenly, affect many parts of the body, spread, shrink, disappear and then return. Rashes can last up to several weeks. Most rashes are mild and go away on their own. Rash symptoms vary: the color may be flesh-colored, tan, pink, red or bluish-purple. The rash can be flat or raised with bumps that look like welts, bug bites, pimples, blisters, sores or scabs. It can be dry, scaly, crusty or oozing. You may experience itching, pain, burning, stinging or swelling.

How do I know if the rash is serious?

- ⇒ If you have significant itching, oozing, or swelling.
- ⇒ The rash involves a large part of the body.
- ⇒ Possible allergic reaction may look like raised welts that are itchy and shrink, resolve and return.
- ⇒ If you experience shortness of breath, swelling of lips, tongue, throat, face or eyes.
- ⇒ The rash does not go away after several days.

Home Care and Prevention

- ⇒ Take any prescribed or over-the-counter medication exactly as directed.
- ⇒ Use Aveeno oatmeal baths, Aveeno soap or lotion (generic formulas are available). Avoid long hot showers and if using a bath soak in cool water. Keep the body cool and the skin well moisturized.
- ⇒ You can apply cool cloths to the affected areas and use Domeboro solution. Calamine lotion or spray can be used especially to moist rashes.
- ⇒ Wear light, loose fitting cotton clothing. Expose the affected area to air as much as possible.
- ⇒ Take Benadryl capsules for relief of the discomfort and itching.
- ⇒ Do not scratch your rash. Breaking the skin can cause infection.
- ⇒ Use hypoallergenic makeup, unscented body soap and laundry products. Avoid things you know irritate your skin.

Follow up at Health Services for further evaluation and treatment. Seek immediate medical attention if you develop fever, chills and sweats, swollen glands, chest tightness, difficulty breathing or swallowing, swollen lips, tongue or throat. Follow up if you develop symptoms of infection (fever, redness, swelling, pus, odor, pain or red streaking or the rash does not go away after several days.