

The Difference Between Allergic and Injection Site Reactions

This handout will explain the difference between allergic and injection site reactions from getting a shot. Know the difference so you can avoid delays in treatment and use the medicine safely.

Injection Site Reaction

All medicines given as a shot may cause a local reaction. Local refers to side effects only at the site of the shot. These include: redness, itching, pain, swelling, bruising, burning, or a small amount of bleeding. Site reactions are usually mild and go away within one to three days.

To Reduce Your Chance of a Reaction

- Let the medicine sit at room temperature for up to 30 minutes before use. This helps reduce pain.
- Give diphenhydramine (Benadryl) 30 minutes before.
- Apply hydrocortisone cream after to help with itching, redness, and swelling. A pain reliever may also be used. Talk with your clinic to find one right for you.
- Allow the skin to dry after using the alcohol swab. If not dry, alcohol pushed in by the needle can cause burning.
- A cold pack applied to the site before and after may help to numb the area. Do not use a warm compress or heating pad as this will increase blood flow and may cause more pain.
- Make sure the shot is given in fatty areas by pinching the skin. A shot in a muscle hurts more than in fat.

- Change spots where the shot is given.
- Never give a shot in a bruise, scar, visible vein or areas with redness, swelling, or broken skin.
- Write down site reactions including all side effects and what you did to help them. Bring your notes to your next clinic visit.

When to Call

Call the clinic if:

- Reaction does not go away after 3 days.
- The local reaction is severe. Severe means: blisters, redness that is larger than your fist (more than 2 inches across), severe bruising, bleeding, pain or itching.
- Site reactions seem to be getting worse with each shot.
- You have a rash across the bridge of your nose and cheeks.
- You see purplish-red spots anywhere on your body.

Call 911 if you have:

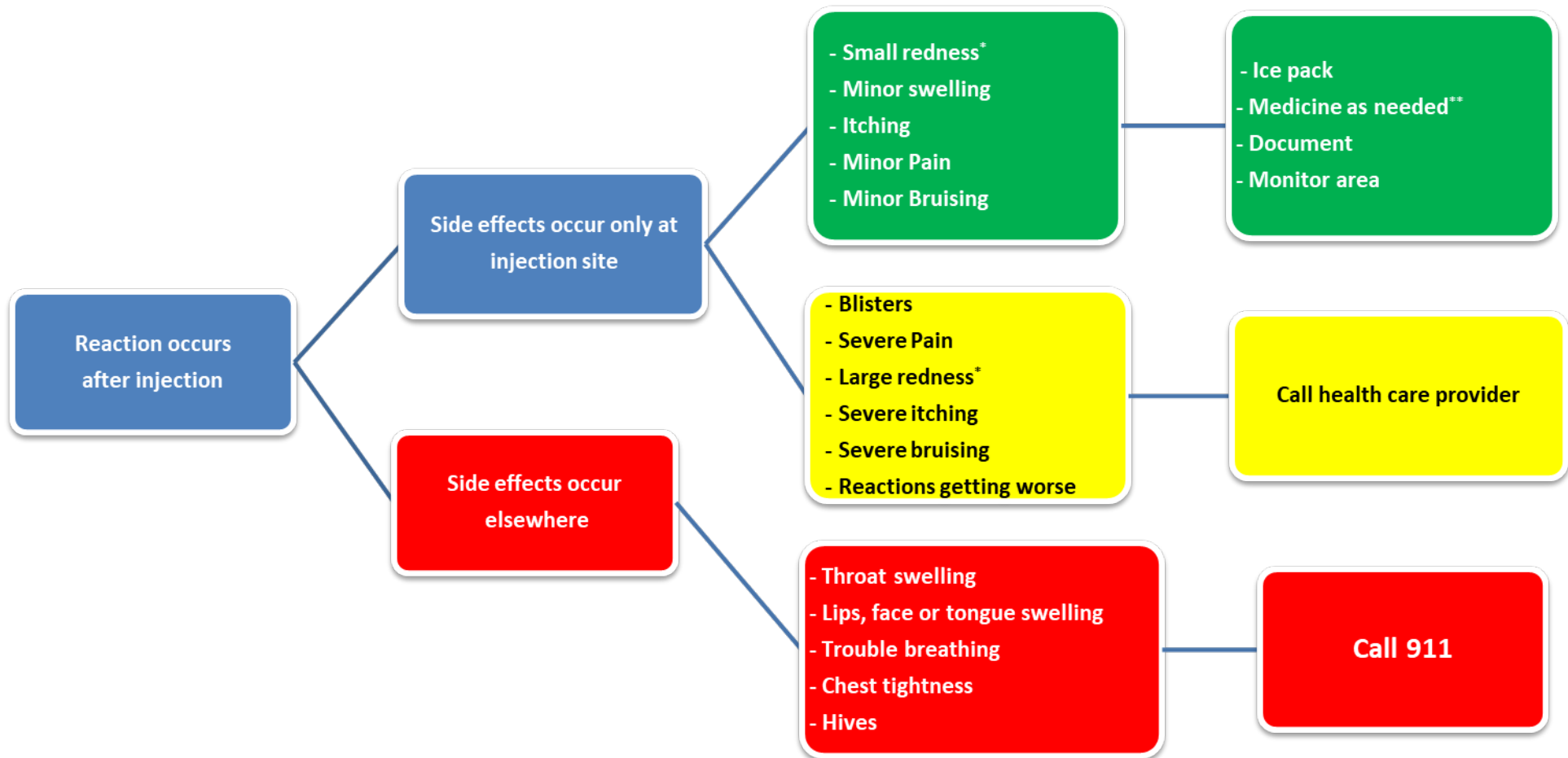
- Swelling of the face, lips or tongue
- Throat swelling or trouble breathing
- Chest tightness
- Hives

Who to Call

Call your health care team at the Digestive Health Center: **608-890-5000**

Your health care team may have given you this information as part of your care. If so, please use it and call if you have any questions. If this information was not given to you as part of your care, please check with your doctor. This is not medical advice. This is not to be used for diagnosis or treatment of any medical condition. Because each person's health needs are different, you should talk with your doctor or others on your health care team when using this information. If you have an emergency, please call 911. Copyright © 12/2019 University of Wisconsin Hospitals and Clinics Authority. All rights reserved. Produced by the Department of Nursing. HF#7942

Reaction Action Plan



*Small redness means no larger than 2" across or smaller than your fist

*Large redness means larger than 2" across or larger than your fist

** Medicines include:

- Over the counter pain product
- Diphenhydramine (Benadryl) or hydrocortisone cream applied afterwards for itching

References:

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 - c. Golimumab: Drug information.
2. American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology. Treatment of Local Injection Reactions. <http://www.aaaai.org/ask-the-expert/treatment-injection-reaction>. Accessed 6/23/16.
3. Mocchi G, Marzo M, Papa A, Armuzzi A, Guidi L. Dermatological adverse reactions during anti-TNF treatments: Focus on inflammatory bowel disease. *J Crohn's Colitis*. 2013;7:769-779