**What is Chronic Urticaria, and What Are the Symptoms?**

**Chronic Urticaria** (chronic hives, **wells**), **angioedema**, or hives lasting less than 6 weeks.

**Chronic Urticaria**
- **Episodic** (it occurs daily)
- Lasts for many weeks
- Usually recurs over months or years
- **Impacts quality of life**
- **Presents in up to 1.8% of the population worldwide**

Differential Diagnosis Is Important (What Else Could It Be?)

- **Autoinflammatory syndromes, such as:**
  - Cryopyrin-associated periodic syndromes (CAPS)
  - Schnitzler’s syndrome
- **Urticarial vasculitis**

**Other conditions that can result in intense itching and scratching:**
- **Scabies**
- **Neuropathic causes**

**Why Chronic Urticaria Is a Problem**

- The cause is often unknown, thus it is not possible to cure patients.

**But:** Chronic Urticaria can be well controlled by preventing signs and symptoms.

**Chronic Urticaria can be managed by:**
- **Avoiding triggers**
  - For example, some people react to non-selective anti-inflammatory drugs such as ibuprofen and aspirin, and discontinuing use can reduce hives.
- **Controlling symptoms with medications**
  - Non-sedating (non-drowsy)
  - Selective antihistamines (at night)
  - Topical antihistamines
  - Non-selective anti-inflammatory drugs
  - **Cyclosporine** (immunosuppressant)

**Facts about available treatments:**

- **Standard dosage of antihistamines may not be sufficient to control symptoms**.
- **Increased dosing or the use of non-selective anti-inflammatory drugs** may be needed.
- **Some non-antihistamine therapies can require prolonged therapy or monitoring of potential adverse effects.**
- **Corticosteroids have been underused.** It can help to reduce the severity of itching, the number of wheals, and angioedema.

**The Unique Experience of the Allergist**

Allergists are the specialists who can best deal with urticaria because they have the unique experience of the allergist. Chronic hives last less than 6 weeks.

**Allergists are:**
- Typically a central white or pink central lesion
- **Variable size** at least 2 mm
- **Typically lasts** 1 to 24 hours
- **May persist** for several days

**Why Chronic Urticaria Is a Problem**

- The itching is disabling both day and night and interferes with concentration, performance, wellbeing, and the ability to fall and stay asleep.
- The disease can last several years. It can take time to feel the right medication that works and does not have adverse side effects.
- Stopping treatment may result in the return of wheals and/or angioedema until the patient is allowed to take the medication again. (on average, after several years)
- People may avoid wearing certain clothing or clothing that exacerbates the itching. (swelling of lips or eyelids)
- Patients may lose hope if treatments have not been effective or effective, and they may stop believing the advice given by medical professionals.

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**REFERENCES**


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