CHRONIC URTICARIA/ANGIOEDEMA

Definition:
The presence of urticaria (hives) on most days, for a period longer than 6 weeks.
- Angioedema occurs in 40% of patients with Chronic Urticaria and usually affects the lips, peri orbital regions, extremities and genitals (seldom the tongue, throat or airway)
- This is often an autoimmune process and is very rarely associated with food allergy. Allergy testing and/or dietary restriction is rarely indicated.

Information Required
- Response to antihistamines (see below)
- History of autoimmune disease
- Urticarial vasculitis (urticaria lasting >24 hours, with associated bruising) This constitutes a more urgent referral.
- If angioedema is occurring in the absence of urticaria, see angioedema management guidelines
- Some exacerbating factors may need avoidance (eg alcohol, NSAIDs, spicy food, heat, tight clothing)

Investigations Required
- Investigations are usually normal in chronic urticaria.
- Can check FBC, ESR, liver enzymes, anti TPO antibody and thyroid function, H Pylori serology, EPG
- ANA, ANCA, C3, C4, CRP for patients with suspected urticarial vasculitis
- In patients who present with severe itch but minimal urticaria, check EUC, LFTs, FBC, iron studies.

Fax referrals to Allergy/Clinical Immunology Service
Flinders Medical Centre
Fax: 08 8204 7483

Red Flags
Red flags should prompt immediate GP referral to Emergency Department
- Angioedema affecting oropharyngeal or laryngeal mucosa (Note – exclude ACEI as a cause)

Suggested GP Management
- Maximal non-sedating antihistamines (may need up to 4x standard dose) - for adults
- Add ranitidine 150mg bd – for adults
- Add doxepin 10-25mg at night – for adults
- Prednisolone use should be restricted to very severe flares, and only used for 3-7 days
- If urticaria remits, no need for referral

Clinical Resources
- ASCIA Chronic Spontaneous Urticaria Guidelines
- Urticaria: Evaluation and Treatment. Paul Schaefer. American Family Physician 2011 May 1;83(9):1078-1084

General Information to assist with referrals and the Referral templates for FMC are available to download from the SALHN Outpatient Services website www.sahealth.sa.gov.au/SALHNoutpatients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date from</th>
<th>Date to</th>
<th>Amendment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>September 2014</td>
<td>September 2016</td>
<td>Original</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>October 2018</td>
<td>October 2021</td>
<td>Revised – No Change Required</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>