

CHRONIC URTICARIA and ANGIOEDEMA

Definition: The presence of urticaria (hives) on most days of the week for longer than 6 weeks.

- Angioedema occurs in 40% of patients with chronic urticaria and usually affects the lips, periorbital regions and extremities (seldom the tongue, throat or airway)
- This is often an autoimmune process and is not associated with food allergy. Allergy testing is rarely indicated.

Information Required

- Response to antihistamines (see below), requirement for corticosteroids
- Associated autoimmune disease
- Factors suggesting urticarial vasculitis- urticaria lesions lasting >24 hours, with associated bruising

If angioedema is occurring in the absence of urticaria, see angioedema referral guidelines

Investigations Required

- Investigations usually normal in chronic urticaria
- Can check FBC, liver enzymes, CRP, Anti TPO, TSH, H Pylori, ANA
- ANCA, C3, C4, for patients with suspected urticarial vasculitis

Fax referrals to Allergy/Clinical Immunology Service

Royal Adelaide Hospital

Fax: 08 7074 6241

Red Flags

Red flags should prompt immediate GP referral to **Emergency Department**

- 🚩 Angioedema affecting oropharyngeal or laryngeal area

Suggested GP Management

- Regular daily non-sedating antihistamines (standard dose, or up to 4x dose)
- Add H2 antagonist (ranitidine, famotidine)
- Prednisolone- short course for very severe flares, for 3-7days only
- **If urticaria remits, no need for referral**

Clinical Resources

- Urticaria: Evaluation and Treatment. Paul Schaefer. American Family Physician 2017 Jun 1;95(11):717-724
<https://www.aafp.org/afp/2017/0601/p717.html>
- ASCIA Chronic Spontaneous Urticaria Guidelines
<https://www.allergy.org.au/health-professionals/papers/chronic-spontaneous-urticaria-csu-guidelines>

General Information to assist with referrals and the referral templates for the RAH are available to download from the CALHN Outpatient Services website: <https://www.rah.sa.gov.au/health-professionals/outpatient-referrals>

Version	Date from	Date to	Amendment
1.01	June-October	July 2022	Original

