**Chronic Spontaneous Urticaria (CSU)**

**What is Chronic spontaneous urticaria?**

**Chronic;** wheals (urticaria) must be present daily for at least six weeks  
**Spontaneous;** because symptoms appear with no obvious trigger.  
**Urticaria;** can often be called hives or nettle rash

**CSU appears as a raised rash often surrounded by inflamed skin, it can look like tiny bumps or large raised patches and appear on any part of the body.**  
Sometimes the rash can be accompanied by swelling (angioedema).

**What causes CSU?**

In the body mast cells circulate in the blood and help the immune system to reduce inflammation, fight infection and support wound healing.  
When you experience urticaria, mast cells in the immune system are activated due to a signal (trigger) and release chemicals, including histamine, into the skins tissue, causing the red itchy raised rash often referred to as hives.  
Researchers think that CSU may be caused by autoimmune disease in up to 50% of people with CSU, the immune system mistakes its own cells as harmful and activates cells, including mast cells, causing the symptoms of urticaria.

**Can allergy trigger CSU?** **NO.** CSU is not caused by allergy so elimination diets, and avoidance of usual allergic triggers do not help to manage CSU.

**Tips to help manage CSU**

- Trying not to scratch  
- Apply emollient  
- Wear loose, light clothing  
- Avoid Stress  
- Avoid Infection  
- Avoid extreme temperatures  
- Avoid certain medications  
- Avoid Alcohol and Caffeine

**It is important to seek help if:**

- Your symptoms are not well controlled, and/or are affecting your day to day activities, and/or your mental health  
- Antihistamines are needed continuously to control symptoms for more than six weeks  
- Symptoms are painful and persistent

If you feel your symptoms are not well controlled it is important that you seek advice from a healthcare professional.

**We’re here to help**

Contact our Helpline Monday–Friday, 9am–5pm  
Call: 01322 619898  
Webchat: allergyuk.org  
Email: info@allergyuk.org  
More info on CSU visit: www.allergyuk.org

Production of this infographic was supported by Novartis  
Allergy UK is the operational name of The British Allergy Foundation, a charitable company limited by guarantee and registered in England and Wales. Company No: 4509293  
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