The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health (RCPCH) have written a series of leaflets to help children, young people and their families cope with allergic conditions. This leaflet describes the care that children and young people with drug allergy should receive.

If you find there are lots of terms on this leaflet that you don’t understand, you can download a copy of ‘Understanding the Language of Allergy’ from the RCPCH website www.rcpch.ac.uk/allergy.

What you should do?

Children are described as having a drug allergy when a specific medicine (even ones that you can buy at the chemist) causes an allergic reaction.

If you suspect your child is having an allergic reaction to a medication STOP the medication immediately and seek medical attention.

Give the child an antihistamine to relieve their symptoms. The symptoms of a drug allergy are usually mild but if the reaction is severe (e.g. breathing difficulties) call 999.

Try and tack the medicine packet with you if your child is taken to hospital with a drug allergy.

What the health professional should do?

The health professional should:

• Advise your child to stop taking the medication immediately and suggest a different medication if the child needs it.
• Give your child some treatment to relieve the symptoms, this may be in the form of an antihistamine medicine and/or a steroid cream/ointment
• Take a medical history to determine what may be causing the symptoms
• Explain the difference between an allergy and a more common adverse drug event
• Ensure that the allergy or adverse reaction is recorded in your child’s medical notes. If your child has had an adverse reaction to a medicine the doctor should also report this to the Medicines Health Regulation Agency by filling in the Yellow Card.

What the health professional should do if they suspect a drug allergy

The health professional may conduct some further investigations, these may include:

• A skin prick test
• A blood test

In some situations a drug challenge test may be required to confirm the diagnosis. This is where the child is given the drug in question in a supervised hospital environment. This is currently the best way to definitely confirm if you are allergic to a drug.
**What the health professional should do if a drug allergy is diagnosed?**

- Ensure that the child’s medical records are coded for the drug allergy and that a yellow card is completed
- Advise your child on what medications to avoid
- Advise you/your child on alternative medications, if that is necessary
- Advise your child on high risk situations and how to manage these
- Provide your child with the contact details for patient support groups (e.g. Anaphylaxis Campaign)
- Discuss whether your child should wear a bracelet or necklace to let people know that he/she has a drug allergy

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In some situations the child may need to be referred for specialist investigations or desensitisation.

**Follow up care**

Over time a person can grow out of drug allergy and the health professional may want to review the diagnosis and update your avoidance advice.

**Where can you get further information?**

Take a look at the RCPCH website: [www.rcpch.ac.uk/allergy](http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/allergy) there are some resources here.

This website might also help:

- Anaphylaxis Campaign: [www.anaphylaxis.org.uk](http://www.anaphylaxis.org.uk)