Never Just Hives

What is chronic hives?

Actor portrayal.

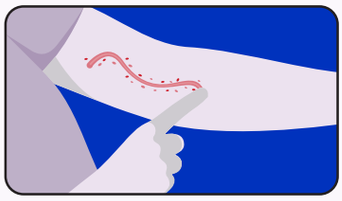
Chronic hives refers to several types of conditions characterized by hives, swelling, or both for more than 6 weeks with or without a clear trigger.

What are the types of chronic hives?

Chronic hives can happen because of a specific trigger or without one. They can persist over time, though the patterns may vary. Even when symptoms improve, chronic hives can return.

Chronic spontaneous urticaria (also called chronic hives with no known external trigger) isn't caused by an allergy or external trigger, hives appear suddenly, and come and go without warning. Chronic hives symptoms last for more than 6 weeks.

Chronic inducible urticaria (also called chronic hives with triggers) includes multiple types of chronic hives that differ based on what trigger causes them to appear. Triggers can include heat, cold, pressure on the skin, exercise, sunlight, water, or vibration. Hives will typically appear shortly after exposure.



The most common form of chronic hives with triggers is **symptomatic dermographism**. It's also called “chronic hives from scratching or rubbing” and it affects more than 70% of people with chronic hives with triggers. Scratching or rubbing on the skin may cause raised, red, itchy lines to appear within minutes. For some people, even everyday things like tight clothing that rubs against the skin can trigger hives or itching.

If you're not sure which type you have, it's important to track your symptoms and talk to your doctor.

Who is impacted by chronic hives?

Over 400,000 people struggle with some form of chronic hives in the US and are still looking for relief.

Women are nearly 2x more likely to experience chronic hives than men.

What are the physical symptoms of chronic hives?

Itchy hives

Red or skin-colored, raised, itchy bumps on the outer layer of skin that usually resolve within 30 minutes to 24 hours. They can appear and disappear daily or almost daily, with or without warning.

Swelling

Severe swelling, also called angioedema, occurs in deeper layers of skin on the lips, eyelids, hands, feet, and other areas. It can last up to 72 hours. Approximately 40% to 50% of people with chronic spontaneous urticaria experience swelling.

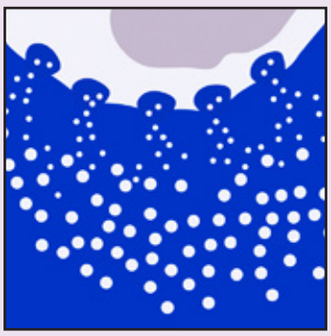
What else is there to know about the cause of chronic hives? **Find out on the next page.**

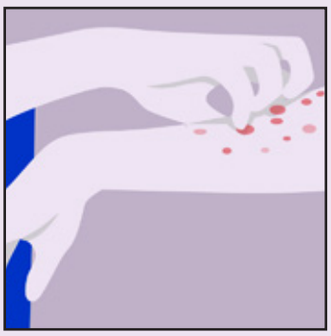
Never Just Hives

Actor portrayal.

What may cause chronic hives?

An overactive immune system can be a cause of your chronic hives





1. An overactive immune system

While the exact cause of your chronic hives is unknown, it's believed to start with the immune system becoming overactive by unknown internal causes or external triggers.

2. Dysregulated immune responses

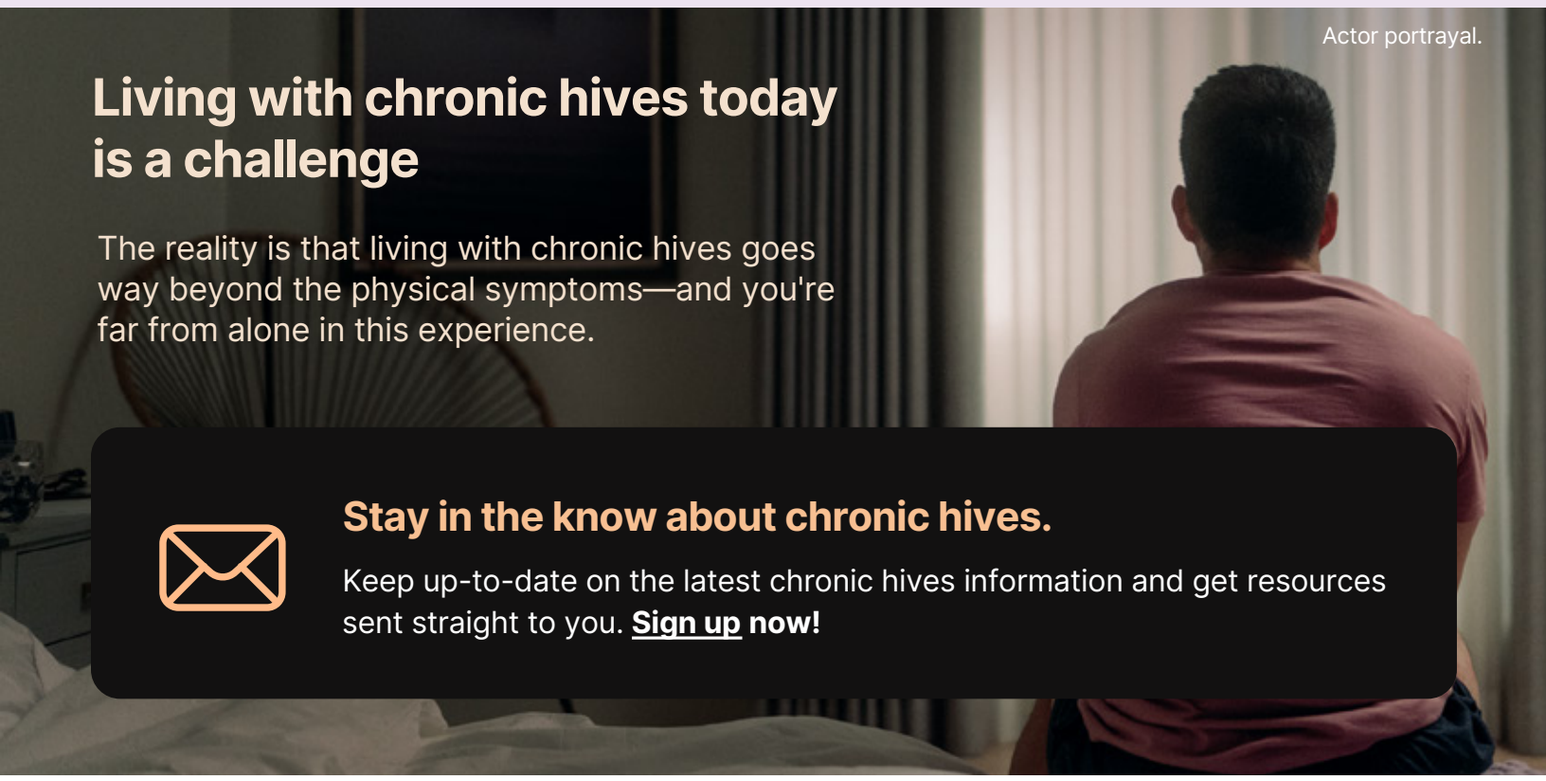
Like a chain reaction, the irregular signals are passed through the immune cells.

3. Histamine release

The signal causes the cells to release a large amount of histamine.

4. Symptoms

The result is the symptoms of chronic hives, including hives, itch, and severe swelling under the skin (angioedema).



Actor portrayal.

Living with chronic hives today is a challenge

The reality is that living with chronic hives goes way beyond the physical symptoms—and you're far from alone in this experience.

Stay in the know about chronic hives.

Keep up-to-date on the latest chronic hives information and get resources sent straight to you. **Sign up now!**

NOVARTIS

Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corporation
East Hanover, New Jersey 07936-1080

© 2026 Novartis

8/26

FA-11739191