

# Town of Niagara Senior Journal



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## Drug Allergies - What to Look Out For

Medications are one of our most powerful weapons against germs and diseases. But sometimes when people take medications, they can have an allergic reaction. That's when a drug causes the body's **immune system** to overreact. When that happens, they may not be able to use the drug again without risking more serious consequences.

Any drug can cause an allergy. But some are more likely to than others. Antibiotics and certain painkillers are among the more common ones. The antibiotic penicillin is the drug most often reported to cause allergic reactions. About 10% of people in the U.S. have a penicillin allergy listed in their medical records.

But probably less than 1% of people are truly allergic to penicillin, says Dr. David Khan, an NIH-funded allergist at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center.

The most typical allergic reactions are skin rashes or hives. In rare cases, you can have a severe reaction called anaphylaxis. This can lead to lightheadedness, throat or tongue swelling, and difficulty breathing. Anaphylaxis can also lead to death if untreated.

Sometimes people mistake side effects of a drug for an allergy. Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and headaches are usually side effects. Everyone has different abilities to tolerate a drug's side effects. It depends on how the drug works in your body. When you can't handle a drug's side effects, it's called a drug sensitivity or intolerance.

Certain reactions may have causes other than the drug itself, too. One common example is getting a rash after taking an antibiotic. Sometimes the rash is actually caused by the infection being treated, not the drug.  
(continued on page 2)

### Senior Yoga/Exercise

Tuesday, Wednesday &  
Thursday

9:30-10:30 am

### BINGO

Tuesday, Wednesday &  
Thursday 11 am-12 noon

### Kim's Senior Transport

Kim's Senior Transport provides Transportation for: Doctor's appointments; Grocery Shopping, Etc.; Drop off and Pick up : Service or Full Campion Care Service; Use only as needed, call for appointment

Call 716-405-7317 for rates and availability



## (continued from page 1) - **Drug Allergies - What to Look Out For**

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Drug allergies may fade over time, Khan says. Nearly half of patients with a confirmed penicillin allergy lose it within five years, he says. After 10 years, about 80% will.

Being labeled with a drug allergy isn't just a minor inconvenience. Alternatives to a drug may not be as good. They can be less effective or have a higher risk of side effects.

"Patients who have a penicillin allergy listed in their chart end up staying in the hospital longer," Khan says. "They require more outpatient visits, more emergency room visits, and there's even a higher rate of death in those patients."

Some alternatives to penicillin can also spur the growth of antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Infections with such bacteria are hard to treat. And they can potentially be fatal.

An allergist can test whether you have a true drug allergy. In certain situations, they can perform skin testing. Your skin is pricked or injected with a needle to allow a tiny amount of the drug into your skin. If you're allergic, the area quickly swells.

If skin testing is negative, the doctor may confirm it with an oral challenge. They will give you increasing doses of the drug and watch you for an allergic reaction.

Right now, the easiest antibiotic allergy to test for is penicillin allergy. Khan's team is working on an allergy test for another widely used class of antibiotics, called cephalosporins.

If you think you may have a drug allergy, talk with your health care provider. They may recommend testing by a board-certified allergist. It's important to get tested before you need the medication again. That can help avoid unnecessary delays in treatment.

### **Is Your House Number Visible?**

If an emergency responder needed to get to your house, could it be easily found? Street numbers of your house or building should be at least 3 inches in height and displayed in a manner that is plainly legible from the street at all times between sunrise and sunset. The color of the numbers should be in sharp contrast to the background. For houses far from the road or obstructed by trees a number should appear on **both sides** of the mailbox which is helpful for anyone trying to locate your home.



## “SAVE THE DATES” 2023

Holiday Luncheon December 7th, 11am-1pm, at the Active Hose Fire Hall (must sign up no later than Monday December 4th)

Veterans Luncheon (veterans and their guests only)

November 9th, 11am—1pm, at the Calvin K Richards Activity Senior/Youth Center (must sign up no later than Monday, November 6th)

### Managing a Drug Allergy

- Watch for symptoms of an allergic reaction. These include rashes, hives, itching, swelling, wheezing, lightheadedness, or difficulty breathing.
- Seek immediate medical help if you have a severe allergic reaction after taking any medication.
- Talk with your health care provider about any possible drug allergies. Ask if they recommend allergy testing, especially for penicillin allergy.
- Consider retesting for confirmed drug allergies. Some allergies fade over time.
- Inform all future health care providers about any drug allergies.

#### Town Board

Supervisor . . . . . Lee Wallace

Deputy Supervisor . . . Charles Teixeira

Councilman . . . . . Marc Carpenter

Councilman . . . . . Samuel Gatto

Councilman . . . . . Richard Sirianni

Town Clerk . . . . . Sylvia Virtuoso

#### Contact Information

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**IT'S BETTER TO  
GROW OLD WITH  
A SENSE OF  
HUMOR THAN  
TO GROW OLD  
WITH NO SENSE  
AT ALL**

## Military Road School

Well, it has finally happened. The Military Road School was demolished recently after sitting empty for years. The developer's plan was to turn it into senior housing which is sorely needed in this area. The school opened in 1930 and several additions were added over the years due to a growing community especially during the building of the power project. The school closed in 1992 and sat idle until some kids broke in and set it on fire in 2019. No one was ever charged with the crime to my knowledge and due to potential contamination by asbestos was left that way until it was examined thoroughly. They tested the remains, drilled core samples, and finally allowed it to be torn down 4 years after it burned.

Here is a picture of the building back in the day before it closed.



We have many class pictures from Military Road School in the Marsh/Rolling local history room, and if you want to see who you might recognize, let Pete know and he would be happy to show them to you.

Give him a call at 716-297-4429 with any questions or comments about history in the Town of Niagara. He is always looking for pictures and documents to add to the 200 year old collection.

A belated thank you to those who responded to his request for hoses and watering cans for historic Witmer Cemetery. There will be a major announcement made in the near future about the future of the cemetery that may be of interest to you or your loved ones. Stay tuned!