

THE ALLERGY & ASTHMA CLINIC

Andrew C. Engler, M.D.

290 Baldwin Avenue, San Mateo, California 94401

(650) 343-4597 FAX (650) 343- 3402

www.theallergyclinic.com

NEWSLETTER

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Allergic Skin Rashes: The Itchy Truth!

Do you frequently suffer from scaly, bumpy, itchy, red and/or swollen skin? Any one of these symptoms can signify an allergic skin condition. These skin irritations are often caused by an immune system reaction indicating an allergy. Allergic skin conditions can take several forms and are due to various causes.

Frequently, eating food to which you are allergic can bring on an itchy rash. Sometimes the cause is obvious and all you need to do is avoid the problematic food but often we need to perform allergy testing to determine the culprit and help you stay out of trouble.

When some substances come into contact with your skin they can cause a rash called contact dermatitis. Allergic contact dermatitis can take 24 to 48 hours to appear, unlike irritant dermatitis, which only takes minutes for a reaction. Common agents that cause allergic contact dermatitis include perfumes, fragrances, latex products, cosmetics, and dyes. Even some ingredients found in medications applied to the skin can cause a reaction, especially antibiotic or anesthetic creams.

Allergic contact dermatitis is best exemplified by the itchy, red, blistered skin experienced after coming in contact with poison ivy, poison oak, or poison sumac. The allergic reaction is produced by a chemical in these plants called

urushiol. You may also have a reaction by touching other items that have contacted these plants including family pets or even garden tools. Washing the skin and contaminated products usually prevents further reactions.

Irritant contact dermatitis is the result of an offending agent which actually damages the skin. The longer the skin contact & the more concentrated the agent, the more severe the resulting reaction. Soaps and strong detergents added to water are common causes. Individuals suffering from other skin diseases, especially eczema, are more susceptible.

Proper treatment of irritant dermatitis requires that the skin be kept from contact with the troubling agent. Gloves may be helpful. Effective treatment is aimed at relieving symptoms and preventing permanent damage. Treatment for contact dermatitis depends on the symptoms. Cold soaking and compresses offer relief for early stages of acute, itchy, blistered rash. Small rash areas may respond to topical creams. However, when large areas of the body are covered, oral corticosteroids may be necessary. If you think you may have contact dermatitis, or are suffering from some of the symptoms we've discussed here, our professional staff is ready to help you. We can help diagnose the problem with the TRUE test, a contact dermatitis Patch Test approved by the FDA. Our staff is happy to explain the benefits of getting tested and

treated for your skin irritations. We're ready to help you enjoy every summer day!

Please Join Us In Welcoming Zuag Yang, PA Our New Physician Asst

Zuag received her Bachelor of Science degree from the University of California, Santa Barbara. She attended graduate school in 2006 at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York. There she received her Master's of Science degree in Physician Assistant Studies. Zuag became interested in medicine through the volunteer work she did as a high school student and was inspired to become a Physician Assistant by the quality of care provided by her father's Physician Assistant.

Zuag Yang is very passionate about medicine and she enjoys helping people. She was born & raised in the Central Valley. She is from a family of eleven, and enjoys spending time with her many nieces and nephews. In her spare time, she enjoys bicycling, cooking, dancing, hiking, traveling, volunteering at the animal shelter, and outdoor photography. Also, Zuag will never pass up the opportunity to go on a roller coaster ride.