

# What's that rash?

Red, itchy skin — you have a rash. Most people get a rash at some point in their lives. Rashes happen when the skin reacts to a foreign “invader.” They also occur with illnesses, like chicken pox or measles.



Poison ivy, bug bites, and allergies are all possible causes for a rash. A minor rash is usually not a sign of a serious health problem. It may be a sign that your skin is reacting to an invader.



## IF YOU NOTICE A RASH, ASK YOURSELF THESE QUESTIONS:

1. Have I been outside recently? In the woods? You could have run into poison ivy or been bitten by an insect.
2. Do I have allergies? Sometimes seasonal allergies to pollen and mold can cause itchy skin.
3. Did I use a new laundry product? Certain laundry detergents and fabric softeners can cause rashes and allergic reactions in some people.
4. Did I use a new skin care product? Fragrances and other ingredients in these products can be irritating to skin.
5. Have I taken a new medicine? Some medicines can cause rashes and allergic reactions. Call your doctor right away if you notice this.
6. Am I wearing new jewelry? Some people are allergic to certain metals, like nickel. This can cause itching and redness.



## WHEN TO SEE A DOCTOR

A rash can be a sign you need medical care. Watch for these red flags:

- Fever
- Feeling unwell
- A rash keeps getting worse
- A rash covers a large area of the body
- Severe pain
- Any rash on the face
- A rash that is very red, oozing, or hot
- A circular rash with a “bull’s eye” in the middle
- A rash that might be caused by your medicine
- Signs of a severe allergy, such as swelling or trouble breathing
- A rash appears after being around someone who has a serious illness, like measles or chicken pox
- A rash lasts more than 2 weeks



## TREATING THE RASH

If your rash is minor and you otherwise feel fine, you can probably treat it at home.

Over-the-counter creams can be helpful. You can also try an ice pack or aloe gel to soothe irritated skin.

If you’re concerned about a rash on yourself or your child, always call your doctor.