

What is causing this rash on my wrist?

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Causes and symptoms Diagnosis Seeing a doctor Treatment Outlook

Rashes are common ailments with many possible causes. The wrist is a common place for rashes because the skin is sensitive and exposed to the elements.

Rashes on the wrist can occur as a result of infection, genetic factors, or contact with something that causes irritation or an allergic reaction.

Rashes can develop on almost any part of the body. People can often determine the cause of a rash by looking at its specific symptoms.

Causes and symptoms

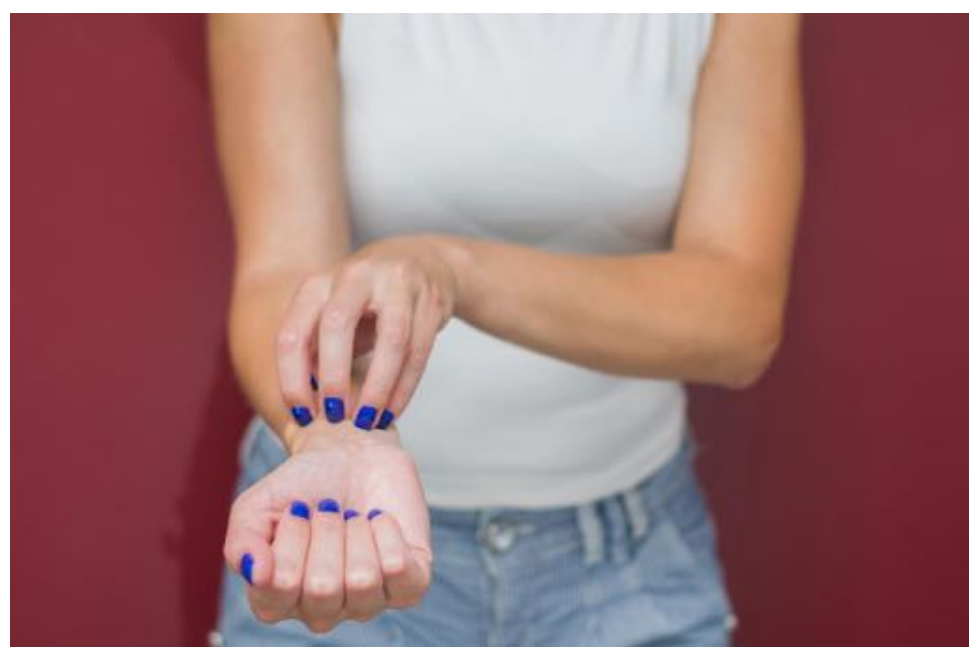
Depending on the cause, a rash that appears on the wrist can have a wide range of symptoms.

It is often possible to determine the cause of a rash based on its specific symptoms and how long it takes to develop. Some rashes take days to develop while others appear very quickly.

Rashes typically have some of the following characteristics:

- red
- itchy
- bumpy
- painful
- sore
- blistering
- swollen
- spotty
- filled with fluid, or oozing

Read on for pictures of common rashes that occur on the wrist, along with their symptoms, causes, and treatments.



A rash on the wrist may cause itchiness and swelling.

Allergic reaction



Eczema

[prev](#) [next](#)

Common causes

An allergic

Rashes are a common reaction to certain materials



Drug rash

- watches
- bracelets
- zips
- fitness-trackers



When external allergens come in contact with the skin, allergic contact dermatitis can occur.

This allergic reaction can appear within hours or days of contact.

One of the most common allergens is nickel, which is found in many everyday items, such as jewelry, that at least 18 percent of people in North America are allergic to nickel.

Lichen planus

Other common triggers for contact dermatitis include:

- detergents and soaps
- poison ivy or poison oak
- lanolin, which occurs in many cosmetic products
- formaldehyde, which is in many fabrics, especially waterproof clothes
- latex, which balloons and rubber gloves contain

Eczema

Eczema, also called atopic dermatitis, refers to a range of similar conditions that cause skin irritation. Eczema affects more than [30 million American people](#).

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Drug rashes can spread, or they may only affect one part of the body, which can be an arm or wrist.

Scabies

Common drug allergies include penicillin, other antibiotics, and sulfa drugs. Anyone who suspects a drug allergy should see a doctor. If the rash becomes severe, it may be a sign of a more serious condition.

Lichen planus

Lichen planus
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Lichen planus
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Scabies

Scabies is a highly contagious condition that people get when mites called *Sarcoptes scabiei* bite into the skin, causing a very itchy rash.

A scabies rash consists of small lines showing where the mites have burrowed into the skin.

The rash is most common on the wrists, and between the fingers.

Scabies is an itchy skin condition caused by a hypersensitivity reaction to the mites.

The first time a person experiences symptoms, the rash is often more severe.

Common ways to get scabies or share it include sharing bedding or clothing with someone who has the condition.



Viral or bacterial infection

Many different infections can cause a rash on the wrist. In many cases, the rash clears up when the infection passes.

However, if a fever accompanies the rash, there is a chance that the infection could be serious, and the individual should speak to their doctor.

Rocky Mountain spotted fever

Rocky Mountain spotted fever is an infectious condition that comes from tick bites.

This condition can cause a splotchy or pinpoint rash anywhere on the body, including the arms and wrists.

The rash can appear [2–4](#) days after a person develops a fever, but may occasionally not appear at all. Other symptoms include a headache, nausea, muscle pain, and loss of appetite.

After spending time outdoors, people should always check for ticks, especially on children. Without treatment, Rocky Mountain spotted fever can cause serious health complications and quickly progress into a life-threatening illness.

Diagnosis

To determine the cause of a rash on the wrist, a doctor will conduct a detailed physical examination, take a person's medical history, and ask a variety of questions about when and how the outbreak developed.

A doctor will look for:

- signs of blisters
- changes in behavior, such as using a different laundry soap or wearing a new piece of jewelry, which could indicate an allergic reaction
- recent outdoor activities where a person may have come into contact with poison ivy, poison oak, or ticks
- use of a new medication

Doctors may use skin-patch testing and skin biopsies to identify allergies or other skin conditions that may be causing the rash.

They may also order a blood test to check for allergies or conditions such as Rocky Mountain spotted fever.

RELATED ARTICLE



What is causing my rash?

Find out what is causing your rash using this helpful guide, which includes 56 pictures to aid diagnosis.

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When to see a doctor

Most rashes go away on their own within a few days. A rash on the wrist can be a sign of an allergy or illness, so if it does not show any signs of improvement after a few days, the individual should seek medical advice.

People should also see their doctor if they suspect scabies. This condition will not improve without medical treatment, and a doctor can prescribe a scabicide to tackle the condition.

In addition, it is best to see a doctor if these symptoms appear:

- fever
- the rash spreads across the body
- the rash develops rapidly
- development of open sores or blisters
- sensitivity inside the mouth or around the genitals
- nausea, muscle pain, and other symptoms of Rocky Mountain spotted fever
- the rash shows signs of infection, including swelling, developing a crust, producing yellow-green pus, or having a red streak radiating from it

Rocky Mountain spotted fever can be life-threatening, so people with symptoms who may have come into contact with ticks should seek medical care immediately.

It is also essential to seek emergency medical treatment if a sudden rash occurs and a person also has trouble breathing.

Treatment

Although the symptoms for different types of rash can be very similar, finding the best treatment for a rash on the wrist depends entirely on what is causing the specific outbreak.

For example, if an individual is allergic to nickel and develops a rash on their wrist after wearing a new bracelet for a few days, the best treatment would be to stop wearing that bracelet.

Similarly, people who develop a rash after starting a new medication may need to stop taking that medication, but only under the guidance of a doctor.



Calamine lotion may treat certain rashes.

Self-care treatments for rashes that are not too severe include:

- washing with cool water
- applying cool compresses
- applying calamine lotion
- limiting contact with common allergens
- taking an oatmeal or baking soda bath

When a rash occurs as part of an allergic reaction, people can take an over-the-counter (OTC) antihistamine to help reduce the swelling, redness, itchiness, and pain. Many antihistamines are available at drugstores and online.

If the rash on the wrist is severe or spreading to other parts of the body, or troubling symptoms such as fever are present, individuals should see a physician for more comprehensive treatment.

A doctor may prescribe:

- prescription antihistamines
- corticosteroid creams and lotions for the skin
- antibiotic ointments for infection
- oral corticosteroids

- phototherapy with ultraviolet light
- biologic or other immunosuppressant medication therapy

The antibiotic doxycycline is the [recommended](#) treatment for Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and an affected person should start taking it as soon as possible to address this severe and life-threatening disease.

Outlook

Most rashes tend to go away, but for individuals with chronic skin conditions, learning how to manage a rash on the wrist is an ongoing process.

Consistent self-care through careful cleaning and moisturizing can help people to manage their sensitive skin.

If a rash occurs due to a medication, the outbreak should end following the discontinuation of the drug. However, the body may take at least a few days to start resolving the rash.

Lichen planus may last for [2 years](#) before disappearing, although some people do have recurrent outbreaks. It can leave brown spots on the skin, but they may eventually go away on their own over time.

After treatment for scabies, which usually takes care of the problem, a person can prevent re-infestation by washing all clothing, bedding, and towels in hot water, and drying them in a hot dryer. They should also vacuum all rugs and upholstery, and clean the washing and drying machines after use.

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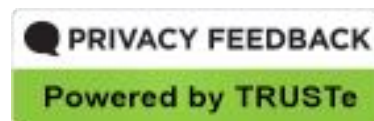
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