

## Don't be rash

It's itchy and red. Maybe painful. A rash is your immune system's way of saying, "I'm protecting you."

When skin cells detect something suspicious (such as poison ivy or chickenpox), they begin a chain reaction that leads to inflammation or swelling. Doctors call it dermatitis. But you might think of it as a rash.

Rashes can be caused by bacteria, viruses, drugs, allergies, genetic disorders, and even light. So it's important to find out what is causing the rash.

Most rashes clear up and go away quickly. Others may need care over a long time.

Call your doctor if any of these are true, advises the NIH News in Health:

- Your rash is so uncomfortable or painful it interferes with daily activities or sleep.
- The rash is on your face.
- Your rash looks worrisome or seems infected.
- You break out in a rash after taking a new medication.
- Your rash lasts for several days.

