

WHAT IS AQUAGENIC URTICARIA?

The first three cases of aquagenic urticaria were reported in 1964.

Aquagenic urticaria is a rare condition in which a person's skin develops red, itchy hives after exposure to water. This condition commonly affects women with symptoms starting around the onset of puberty. Aquagenic urticaria is thought to be an allergy to water and can be triggered by many water sources, including rain, snow, sweat or tears. Due to the rarity of this condition, there is very limited information regarding the causes and effectiveness of certain treatments.

01 | Causes

Researchers are unsure of the exact cause of this condition, but through ongoing research, they have proposed the following theories:

- An immune response is triggered by an allergen or chemical in the water
- An interaction between water and a substance found in or on the skin generates a toxic material, which leads to the development of hives

02 | Symptoms

Symptoms of aquagenic urticaria normally start within 30 minutes of exposure to water and can last anywhere between 30 minutes and 2 hours. Some symptoms that people with this condition might experience include:

- Reddening of the skin
- Burning sensations
- Lesions
- Welts
- Inflammation

Symptoms will typically fade on their own 30 to 60 minutes after the skin is dry.

03 | Treatments

While there is no cure for aquagenic urticaria, treatment options are available to help alleviate symptoms. Antihistamines are often the first recommendation to treat allergy-like symptoms, including hives. Other treatment options are:

- Creams or other topical agents
- EpiPen (for severe cases of aquagenic urticaria)
- Phototherapy
- Steroid medications

For more information on aquagenic urticaria and supportive resources, please visit allergyasthmanetwork.org

Did You Know?

There are only about 50 cases of aquagenic urticaria reported in medical literature.

References

<https://www.healthline.com/health/aquagenic-urticaria#treatment>

<https://rarediseases.info.nih.gov/diseases/10901/aquagenic-urticaria>

<https://dermnetnz.org/topics/aquagenic-urticaria>

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3276800/>