



Are you **itching** for answers?

If you've had a spontaneous appearance of hives,* angioedema or both for 6 weeks or more, you could have

CHRONIC IDIOPATHIC URTICARIA (CIU)[†]

What is chronic idiopathic urticaria (CIU)?

CIU is a skin disorder characterized by **spontaneous hives and/or angioedema for more than 6 weeks.**

Hives



Angioedema



Angioedema and hives



Individual cases may not be representative of the general population.

Photos are courtesy of the urticaria network e. V. (UNEV) and Dr. Martin Metz.

C – Chronic

means the urticaria continues to develop for more than 6 weeks (although in some cases it can persist for years).

I – Idiopathic

means it is not caused by specific triggers, and occurs unpredictably.

U – Urticaria

refers to groupings of raised, red or white itchy hives (wheals) of various sizes that appear and disappear on any part of the body, but often on the face and extremities.

CIU has been shown to be a distressing disease that has a **substantial impact on quality of life.** People who have it often suffer from **social isolation, depression, sleep disturbances and anxiety.**

Notes



Your treatment checklist

It can be helpful to keep a reminder list of what you can do if the symptoms of CIU appear.

Medications:

- Oral antihistamines
- Other drugs prescribed or recommended by your doctor

Non-pharmaceutical treatments:

- Cold compresses
- Cool baths (avoid hot baths or showers)
- Loose-fitting clothing
- Avoid tight underwear
- Avoid any skin irritation

Angioedema

Although some people with CIU can have only hives, most have both hives and angioedema.

- Large welts or swelling of the skin which can occur around the eyes and lips, hands, feet, genitalia and inside the throat
- Angioedema is less itchy than hives, but can cause pain or burning
- Though fairly rare, people with CIU can have only angioedema and no hives

If you live with CIU you know it can have an important impact on your quality of life.

Who are the people living with CIU?

- CIU is seen slightly more often in women
- Typically, about half the cases of CIU are seen in 20 to 40 year olds, but the condition can occur at any age
- 25% of patients with CIU have an atopic background

Because it is spontaneous, CIU can be unpredictable

CIU involves symptoms that are not caused by a specific trigger – they just seem to show up. They last for 6 weeks or more, and the symptoms may start again at any time in the future.

CIU can have a **continuous** or **intermittent** presence

How long does CIU last?

About half of CIU cases last up to 1 year, the average cases lasts 3 to 5 years.

CIU can last longer than 5 years if symptoms are more severe or concurrent with angioedema.

CIU treatment options

The symptoms of CIU can be treated with various medications, – both over-the-counter and prescription.

Your doctor can talk to you about the range of treatments available, and help find the medication — or combination of medications — that works best for you. A medication that works for one person may not be effective for another.

DON'T GIVE UP.

Talk to your doctor and ask about **CIU and a referral to a specialist.**

When managing CIU, consider staying informed and staying connected with others who have the same condition.

Visit one of the following sites for more information:

Itching for Answers

<http://www.itchingforanswers.ca>

Canadian Skin Patient Alliance

<http://www.canadianskin.ca>

American Academy of Dermatology

<http://www.aad.org>

American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology

<http://www.acaai.org/hives>

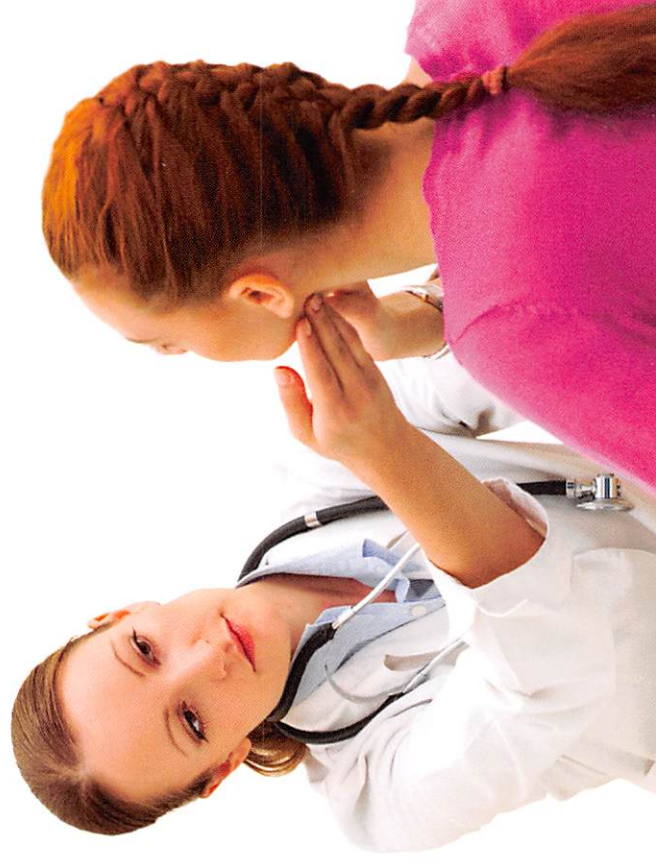
Listing of third-party websites does not imply an endorsement by, or association with, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc. Therefore, Novartis Pharmaceuticals Canada Inc. does not assume responsibility for the accuracy and appropriateness of the information contained in these websites.

Write down your questions to ask your doctor

Here is a list of sample questions:

- What is causing my symptoms?
- Are there other causes for my symptoms?
- How long will I have these hives?
- What tests do I need? Do these tests require any particular preparation?
- What treatments are available?
- Which treatments do you recommend?
- Do these treatments have side effects?
- Will treatment for my hives affect my other conditions and treatments?

And don't hesitate to ask other questions that occur to you during your appointment.



What to ask your doctor at your next visit

Whether it's your family physician or a specialist, appointments can be brief, so it is best to be well prepared.

- **Write down any symptoms you have experienced**, including any that may seem unrelated to the reason for which you scheduled the appointment. If you have a diary of your symptoms, bring it along.

- **Write down key personal information**, including any important life changes or sources of stress.

- **Make a list of all medications** including prescription and over-the-counter drugs as well as "natural" remedies you're taking.

Medication	For what condition

Tips on living with CIU

Maintaining a good quality of life that includes a social life can be challenging with an unpredictable disease like CIU. Below are some tips to help you meet that challenge.

First and foremost – stay cool, stay calm

- **Keep your skin cool.** Consider staying in an air-conditioned environment in summer
- **Do your best to reduce stress.** Avoid stressful situations, and consider taking up a relaxing hobby or activity, like yoga or meditation, to help you relax

Take care of yourself and your surroundings

- **Pamper yourself!**
 - **Apply cool, wet compresses to your skin.** Covering affected skin with bandages or dressings can be soothing and prevent scratching
 - **Take a cool bath.** But not too cold – make it comfortable! Adding some baking soda, uncooked oatmeal or colloidal oatmeal can help with itching
- **Dress for success!** Wear loose, smooth-textured clothing, preferably cotton. Stay away from tight, scratchy, or rough material, or anything made from wool
- **Avoid anything that seems to aggravate your CIU.** Try to avoid anything that irritates your skin or causes an allergic reaction, such as certain foods, medications, pollen, pet dander, latex or insect stings



Take a week-long snapshot of your urticaria

Weekly Urticaria Activity Score (UAS7)

Complete this questionnaire over 7 consecutive days. Your responses will help your doctor assess how active your chronic idiopathic urticaria (CIU) is. Please circle the score that corresponds to the number of wheals you have (see description in chart below) and the score that represents the intensity of your pruritus (itching) on a daily basis (see below the chart). Remember to bring your completed questionnaire to your next visit.

Date	Daily number of wheals	+	Daily intensity of pruritus	=	Daily UAS score*
<i>Example</i>	0 ① 2 3	+	0 1 ② 3	=	0 1 2 ③ 4 5 6
Day 1	0 1 2 3	+	0 1 2 3	=	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Day 2	0 1 2 3	+	0 1 2 3	=	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Day 3	0 1 2 3	+	0 1 2 3	=	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Day 4	0 1 2 3	+	0 1 2 3	=	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Day 5	0 1 2 3	+	0 1 2 3	=	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Day 6	0 1 2 3	+	0 1 2 3	=	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
Day 7	0 1 2 3	+	0 1 2 3	=	0 1 2 3 4 5 6
					UAS7 score†

Adapted from Zuberbier *et al.*

*The sum of the daily number of wheals and daily intensity of pruritus.

†The sum of the daily UAS scores over 7 consecutive days.

Assessment of disease activity in patients with CIU (UAS scale)

Score	Wheals	Pruritus
0	None	None
1	Mild (less than 20 wheals/24 hours)	Mild (present but not annoying or troublesome)
2	Moderate (20-50 wheals/24 hours)	Moderate (troublesome but does not interfere with normal daily activity or sleep)
3	Intense (more than 50 wheals/24 hours or large confluent areas of wheals)	Intense (severe itch, which is sufficiently troublesome to interfere with normal daily activity or sleep)

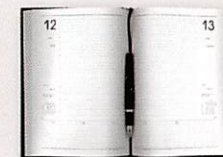
Remember to complete this questionnaire for your next visit with your doctor.

Try tracking your symptoms

Urticaria trigger list

If your doctor is still trying to determine what kind of urticaria you have (chronic or acute), it may be helpful for you to keep a list of anything that you feel may have triggered your hives; e.g., certain foods or food additives, alcohol, medications, or situations such as temperature extremes, tight clothing or emotional stress.

Possible trigger	Time between exposure to trigger and symptoms



CIU diary

Don't forget to keep a diary, writing down your activities every day, along with when and where (on your body) hives occur, and what you ate that day.

Bring the trigger list (if you were asked to fill it out) and diary with you to your doctor's appointments.

Download the full Symptom Tracker App today!

Visit itchingforanswers.ca,
or search for the **CIU Tracker App** at:

