

Abdominal aortic aneurysm

An abdominal aortic aneurysm (AAA) is a swelling (aneurysm) of the aorta – the main blood vessel that leads away from the heart, down through the abdomen to the rest of the body.

The abdominal aorta is the largest blood vessel in the body and is usually around 2cm wide – roughly the width of a garden hose. However, it can swell to over 5.5cm – what doctors class as a large AAA.

Large aneurysms are rare, but can be very serious. If a large aneurysm bursts, it causes huge internal bleeding and is usually fatal.

The bulging occurs when the wall of the aorta weakens. Although what causes this weakness is unclear, smoking and high blood pressure are thought to increase the risk of an aneurysm.

AAAs are most common in men aged over 65. A rupture accounts for more than 1 in 50 of all deaths in this group.

This is why all men are invited for a [screening test](#) when they turn 65. The test involves a simple [ultrasound scan](#), which takes around 10-15 minutes.

Symptoms of an AAA

In most cases, an AAA causes no noticeable symptoms. However, if it becomes large, some people may develop a pain or a pulsating feeling in their abdomen (tummy) or persistent back pain.

An AAA doesn't usually pose a serious threat to health, but there's a risk that a larger aneurysm could burst (rupture).

A ruptured aneurysm can cause massive internal bleeding, which is usually fatal. Around 8 out of 10 people with a rupture either die before they reach hospital or don't survive surgery.

The most common symptom of a ruptured aortic aneurysm is sudden and severe pain in the abdomen.

If you suspect that you or someone else has had a ruptured aneurysm, call 999 immediately and ask for an ambulance.

Achilles tendinopathy

Achilles tendinopathy, sometimes known as tendinitis, is a condition that can cause pain, stiffness and swelling of the Achilles tendon. This is a tendon connecting your calf muscle to your heel

What are the symptoms of Achilles tendinopathy?

Symptoms may vary from person to person. They can appear gradually or suddenly.

People may experience:

- swelling
- pain that's worse during or after moving or exercising
- stiffness that's worse in the morning or after a period of rest
- tenderness to touch the affected area
- mild heat
- loss of movement and strength around the ankle and foot

People can have one or multiple symptoms.

Acne

[See all parts of this guide](#)

About acne

Acne is a common skin condition that affects most people at some point. It causes spots, oily skin and sometimes skin that's hot or painful to touch.

Acne most commonly develops on the:

- face – this affects almost everyone with acne
- back – this affects more than half of people with acne
- chest – this affects about 15% of people with acne

Types of spots

There are 6 main types of spot caused by acne:

- blackheads – small black or yellowish bumps that develop on the skin; they're not filled with dirt, but are black because the inner lining of the hair follicle produces pigmentation (colouring)
- whiteheads – have a similar appearance to blackheads, but may be firmer and won't empty when squeezed

- papules – small red bumps that may feel tender or sore
- pustules – similar to papules, but have a white tip in the centre, caused by a build-up of pus
- nodules – large hard lumps that build up beneath the surface of the skin and can be painful
- cysts – the most severe type of spot caused by acne; they're large pus-filled lumps that look similar to boils and carry the greatest risk of causing permanent scarring



Papules are small red bumps that may feel tender or sore.

Source:

<https://dermnetnz.org/>



Blackheads are small black or yellow lumps that form on the skin.

Source: <https://dermnetnz.org/>

What can I do if I have acne?

The self-help techniques below may be useful:

- Don't wash affected areas of skin more than twice a day. Frequent washing can irritate the skin and make symptoms worse
- Wash the affected area with a mild soap or cleanser and lukewarm water. Very hot or cold water can make acne worse
- Don't try to "clean out" blackheads or squeeze spots. This can make them worse and cause permanent scarring
- Avoid using too much make-up and cosmetics. Use water-based products that are described as non-comedogenic (this means the product is less likely to block the pores in your skin)
- Completely remove make-up before going to bed
- If dry skin is a problem, use a fragrance-free, water-based emollient
- Regular exercise can't improve your acne, but it can boost your mood and improve your self-esteem. Shower as soon as possible once you finish exercising, as sweat can irritate your acne
- Wash your hair regularly and try to avoid letting your hair fall across your face

Although acne can't be cured, it can be controlled with treatment. Several creams, lotions and gels for treating spots are available at pharmacies. If you develop acne, it's a good idea to speak to your pharmacist for advice.

Treatments can take up to 3 months to work, so don't expect results overnight. Once they do start to work, the results are usually good.

Acute cholecystitis

Acute cholecystitis is swelling (inflammation) of the gallbladder. It is a potentially serious condition that usually needs to be treated in hospital.

The main symptom of acute cholecystitis is a sudden sharp pain in the upper right side of your tummy (abdomen) that spreads towards your right shoulder.

The affected part of the abdomen is usually extremely tender, and breathing deeply can make the pain worse.

Unlike some other types of [abdominal pain](#), the pain associated with acute cholecystitis is usually persistent, and doesn't go away within a few hours.

Some people may have additional symptoms, such as:

- a high temperature (fever)
- nausea and vomiting
- sweating
- loss of appetite
- yellowing of the skin and the whites of the eyes (jaundice)
- a bulge in the abdomen

Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia

[See all parts of this guide](#)

About acute lymphoblastic leukaemia

Leukaemia is cancer of the white blood cells. Acute leukaemia means the condition progresses rapidly and aggressively and requires immediate treatment.

Acute leukaemia is classified according to the type of white blood cells affected by cancer. There are 2 main types:

- lymphocytes, which are mostly used to fight viral infections
- neutrophils, which perform several functions, such as fighting bacterial infections, defending the body against parasites and preventing the spread of tissue damage

These pages focus on acute lymphoblastic leukaemia, which is cancer of the lymphocytes. The following other types of leukaemia are covered elsewhere:

- [chronic lymphocytic leukaemia](#)
- [chronic myeloid leukaemia](#)
- [acute myeloid leukaemia](#)

Warning signs of acute leukaemia

Symptoms of acute lymphoblastic leukaemia usually begin slowly before rapidly getting severe as the number of immature white blood cells in your blood increases. Symptoms include:

- pale skin
- tiredness
- breathlessness
- having repeated infections over a short space of time
- unusual and frequent bleeding

Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia: Children

Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL) is a type of blood cancer. One third of all childhood cancers are leukaemia. Approximately, 3 out of 4 of these are acute lymphoblastic (ALL). ALL can affect children of any age but is more common in children aged 1 to 4 years old.

More children than ever are surviving childhood cancer. There are new and better drugs and treatments, and we can now also work to reduce the after-effects of having had cancer in the past.

It's devastating to hear that your child has cancer. At times it can feel overwhelming but there are many healthcare professionals and support organisations to help you through this difficult time.

Understanding more about the cancer your child has and the treatments that may be used can often help parents to cope. Your child's specialist will give you more detailed information, and if you have any questions it's important to ask the specialist doctor or nurse who knows your child's individual situation.

Leukaemia

Leukaemia is a cancer of the white blood cells. All blood cells are made in the bone marrow, the spongy substance at the core of some bones in the body.

Bone marrow contains:

- red blood cells, which carry oxygen around the body
- platelets, which help the blood to clot and control bleeding
- white blood cells, which help fight infection

There are 2 different types of white blood cells: lymphocytes and myeloid cells (including neutrophils). These white blood cells work together to fight infection. Normally, white blood cells develop, repair and reproduce themselves in an orderly and controlled way. In leukaemia, however, the process gets out of control and the cells continue to divide in the bone marrow, but do not mature.

These immature dividing cells fill up the bone marrow and stop it from making healthy blood cells. As the leukaemia cells are not mature, they cannot work properly. This leads to an increased risk of infection.

There are 4 main types of leukaemia:

- acute lymphoblastic (ALL)
- [acute myeloid \(AML\)](#)
- chronic lymphocyte (CLL)
- chronic myeloid (CML)

Chronic leukaemias usually affect adults and each type of leukaemia has its own characteristics and treatment. ALL is a cancer of immature lymphocytes, called lymphoblasts or blast cells.

There are two different types of lymphocytes; T-cells and B-cells. Often, leukaemia occurs at a very early stage in the immature lymphocytes, before they have developed into either T-cells or B-cells. However, if the cells have developed this far before becoming leukaemic, the type of leukaemia may be known as T-cell or B-cell leukaemia.

This page is about acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (AL

Signs and symptoms

As the leukaemia cells multiply in the bone marrow, the production of normal blood cells is reduced. Children may therefore become tired and lethargic because of anaemia, which is caused by a lack of red blood cells.

Children may develop bruises, and bleeding may take longer to stop because of the low number of platelets present in their blood (which help blood to clot). Sometimes, children suffer from infections because of low numbers of normal white blood cells.

A child is likely to feel generally unwell and may complain of aches and pains in the limbs or may have swollen lymph glands.

At first, the symptoms are just like those of a viral infection, but when they continue for more than a week or two, the diagnosis is

Acute lymphoblastic leukaemia: Teenagers and young adults

[See all parts of this guide](#)

Introduction

This section is for teenagers and young adults and is about a type of cancer called acute lymphoblastic leukaemia (ALL). The other main type of leukaemia that can affect teenagers and young adults is acute myeloid leukaemia.

If you're looking for information about ALL in people of all ages, please see our general [ALL](#) section.

Leukaemia is a cancer of the white blood cells. In leukaemia, the process for making new white blood cells gets out of control. Immature white blood cells (called blasts) keep being made and build up in the bone marrow until there isn't enough room for the bone marrow to make healthy white blood cells, red blood cells and platelets. The body needs these cells to:

- help fight infection (white cells)
- carry oxygen from the lungs around the body (red blood cells)
- stop cuts bleeding by clotting blood (platelets)

Symptoms

Many of the symptoms of ALL are caused by having fewer than normal healthy blood cells in the body. Symptoms can include:

- looking paler than usual and feeling tired – because of too few red blood cells (anaemia)
- bruises – you may bruise more easily and it could take longer for bleeding to stop, if you have less blood clotting cells (platelets) than normal
- infections – because there are too few mature white blood cells to fight infection
- aches and pains in your bones
- swollen glands (lymph nodes) in your neck, under your arm or in your groin
- feeling unwell and run down
- fever and sweats – you may have a high temperature without any obvious cause, such as an infection
- headaches and visual disturbance

There can be other reasons you may have these symptoms. But if you are worried that you may have ALL, you should speak to your GP. They'll examine you and refer you to a hospital if they think you need to see a specialist doctor.

Acute myeloid leukaemia

[See all parts of this guide](#)

About acute myeloid leukaemia

Leukaemia is cancer of the white blood cells. Acute leukaemia means it progresses rapidly and aggressively, and usually requires immediate treatment.

Acute leukaemia is classified according to the type of white blood cells affected. The 2 main types of white blood cells are:

- lymphocytes – mostly used to fight viral infections
- myeloid cells – which perform a number of different functions, such as fighting bacterial infections, defending the body against parasites and preventing the spread of tissue damage

This topic focuses on acute myeloid leukaemia (AML), which is an aggressive cancer of the myeloid cells. The following types of leukaemia are covered separately:

- [acute lymphoblastic leukaemia](#)
- [chronic myeloid leukaemia](#)
- [chronic lymphocytic leukaemia](#)

Signs and symptoms of AML

The [symptoms of AML](#) usually develop over a few weeks and become increasingly more severe. Symptoms can include:

- pale skin
- tiredness
- [breathlessness](#)
- frequent infections
- unusual and frequent bleeding, such as bleeding gums or [nosebleeds](#)

In more advanced cases, AML can make you extremely vulnerable to life-threatening infections or serious internal bleeding.

Read more about the [complications of AML](#)

Acute myeloid leukaemia: Children

Acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) is a type of blood cancer. A third of all childhood cancers are leukaemia. Less than a quarter of these are acute myeloid leukaemia (AML). AML can affect children of any age. Girls and boys are equally affected

More children than ever are surviving childhood cancer. There are new and better drugs and treatments, and we can now also work to reduce the after-effects of having had cancer in the past.

It's devastating to hear that your child has cancer. At times it can feel overwhelming but there are many healthcare professionals and support organisations to help you through this difficult time.

Understanding more about the cancer your child has and the treatments that may be used can often help parents to cope. Your child's specialist will give you more detailed information and if you have any questions it's important to ask the specialist doctor or nurse who knows your child's individual situation.

Leukaemia

Leukaemia is a cancer of the white blood cells. All blood cells are produced in the bone marrow, the spongy substance at the core of some of the bones in the body.

Bone marrow contains:

- red blood cells, which carry oxygen around the body
- platelets, which help the blood to clot and control bleeding
- white blood cells, which help to fight infection

There are 2 different types of white blood cells: lymphocytes and myeloid cells (including neutrophils). These white blood cells work together to fight infection. Normally, white blood cells develop, repair and reproduce themselves in an orderly and controlled way. In leukaemia, however, the process gets out of control and the cells continue to divide in the bone marrow, but do not mature.

These immature dividing cells fill up the bone marrow and stop it from making healthy blood cells. As the leukaemia cells are not mature, they cannot work properly. This leads to an increased risk of infection.

There are 4 main types of leukaemia:

- acute lymphoblastic (ALL)
- acute myeloid (AML)
- chronic lymphocytic (CLL)
- chronic myeloid (CML)

Chronic leukaemias occur mostly in adults. CLL is exclusively an adult condition, whereas CML does occur rarely in children and young people. Each type of leukaemia has its own characteristics and treatment.

This page is about acute myeloid leukaemia (AML).

Acute myeloid leukaemia (AML)

Acute myeloid leukaemia is an overproduction of immature myeloid white blood cells (blast cells).

Cells that have started to show some of the features of myeloid cells are said to show differentiation. Cells that do not show signs of becoming a particular type of white blood cell are known as undifferentiated.

There are different sub-types of AML, depending on exactly which type of cell has become leukaemic, the stage of development (maturation) the cells are at, and whether the cells are differentiated. Knowing the sub-type of AML is important, as it helps doctors decide on the best treatment.

There are several classification systems for the sub-types of AML. The most commonly used system in the UK is the French-American-British (FAB) system.

FAB classification of AML

- M0 – AML with minimal evidence of myeloid differentiation
- M1 – AML without maturation
- M2 – AML with maturation
- M3 – Acute promyelocytic leukaemia (APL)
- M4 – Acute myelomonocytic leukaemia
- M5 – Acute monocytic/monoblastic leukaemia
- M6 – Acute erythroleukaemia
- M7 – Acute megakaryoblastic leukaemia

A newer system known as the WHO (World Health Organization) classification system is also sometimes used.

Signs and symptoms

As the leukaemia cells multiply in the bone marrow, the production of normal blood cells is reduced. Children may therefore become tired and lethargic because of anaemia, which is caused by a lack of red blood cells.

Children may develop bruises, and bleeding may take longer to stop because of the low number of platelets present in their blood. Sometimes they may suffer from infections because of low numbers of normal white blood cells.

A child is likely to feel generally unwell and may complain of aches and pains in the limbs or may have swollen lymph glands.

At first, the symptoms are just like those of a viral infection, but when they continue for more than a week or two, the diagnosis usually becomes clear.

Acute myeloid leukaemia: Teenagers and young adults

Introduction

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For information about AML in people of all ages, read our general [AML](#) section.

Leukaemia is a cancer of the white blood cells. In leukaemia, the process for making new white blood cells gets out of control.

Immature white blood cells (called blasts) keep being made and build up in the bone marrow until there isn't enough room for the bone marrow to make healthy white blood cells, red blood cells and platelets. The body needs these cells to:

- help fight infection (white cells)
- carry oxygen from the lungs around the body (red blood cells)
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Symptoms

Many of the symptoms of AML are caused by having fewer than normal healthy blood cells in the body. Symptoms can include:

- looking paler than usual and feeling tired – because of too few red blood cells (anaemia)
- bruises or bleeding – you may bruise more easily and it could take longer for bleeding to stop, if you have less blood clotting cells (platelets) than normal
- infections – because there are too few mature white blood cells to fight infection
- aches and pains in your bones
- swollen glands (lymph nodes) in your neck, under your arm or in your groin
- feeling unwell and run down
- fever and sweats – you may have a high temperature without any obvious cause, such as an infection
- headaches and blurred vision – because of too many white blood cells
- breathlessness – because of too many white blood cells.

Acute pancreatitis

About acute pancreatitis

Acute pancreatitis is a serious condition where the pancreas becomes inflamed over a short period of time. The pancreas is a small organ located behind the stomach and below the ribcage.

Most people with acute pancreatitis improve within a week and experience no further problems, but severe cases can have serious complications and can even be fatal.

Acute pancreatitis is different to [chronic pancreatitis](#), where the inflammation of the pancreas persists for many years.

The most common symptoms of acute pancreatitis include:

- suddenly getting severe pain in the centre of your abdomen (tummy)
- feeling or being sick
- [diarrhoea](#)

Read more about the [symptoms of acute pancreatitis](#) and [diagnosing acute pancreatitis](#).

When to seek medical help

Contact your GP immediately if you suddenly develop severe abdominal pain. If this isn't possible, contact [NHS 24's 111 service](#) or your local [out-of-hours service](#) for advice.

Why it happens

It's thought that acute pancreatitis occurs when a problem develops with some of the enzymes (chemicals) in the pancreas, which causes them to try to digest the organ.

Acute pancreatitis is most often linked to:

- [gallstones](#) – which accounts for around half of all cases
- alcohol consumption – which accounts for about a quarter of all cases

By reducing your alcohol intake and altering your diet to make gallstones less likely, you can help to reduce your chances of developing acute pancreatitis.

Read more about the [causes of acute pancreatitis](#) and [preventing acute pancreatitis](#).

Who is affected?

Acute pancreatitis is more common in middle-aged and elderly people, but it can affect people of any age.

Men are more likely to develop alcohol-related pancreatitis, while women are more likely to develop it as a result of gallstones.

Addison's disease

About Addison's disease

Addison's disease (also known as primary adrenal insufficiency or hypoadrenalism) is a rare disorder of the adrenal glands.

The adrenal glands are 2 small glands that sit on top of the kidneys. They produce essential hormones: cortisol, aldosterone and adrenaline.

In Addison's disease, the adrenal gland is damaged, and not enough cortisol and aldosterone are produced.

About 8,400 people in the UK have Addison's disease. It can affect people of any age. It's most common between the ages of 30 and 50. It's also more common in women than men.

Early-stage symptoms of Addison's disease are similar to other more common health conditions, such as [depression](#) or [flu](#). You may experience:

- fatigue (lack of energy or motivation)
- muscle weakness
- low mood
- loss of appetite and unintentional weight loss
- increased thirst

Over time, these problems may become more severe and you may experience further symptoms, such as dizziness, fainting, cramps and exhaustion. You may also develop small areas of darkened skin, or darkened lips or gums.

Although these symptoms aren't always caused by Addison's disease, you should see your GP, so they can be investigated.

Read more about the [symptoms of Addison's disease](#) and [diagnosing Addison's disease](#)

Adenomyosis

Adenomyosis is a condition that causes the lining of the womb (the endometrium) to bury into the muscular wall of the womb.

It can affect the whole womb or just one part of the womb.

Adenomyosis is not a life-threatening condition, but the symptoms can have a big impact on your day-to-day life so it's important to get the support you need.

Symptoms

It's possible to have adenomyosis and have no symptoms. Symptoms you might experience include:

- heavy periods that last for a long time
- severe period pain
- a feeling of pressure in your tummy
- bloating (your tummy sticks out more than normal)

Symptom questionnaire

You can use our [menstrual health symptom questionnaire \(PDF, 421KB\)](#) to keep a note of your symptoms and how you're feeling. You can print it and talk about it with your healthcare professional to help them understand the different symptoms you're experiencing.

Alcohol-related liver disease

About alcohol-related liver disease

Alcohol-related liver disease (ARLD) refers to liver damage caused by excess alcohol intake. There are several stages of severity and a range of associated symptoms.

ARLD doesn't usually cause any symptoms until the liver has been severely damaged. When this happens, symptoms can include:

- feeling sick
- weight loss
- loss of appetite
- yellowing of the eyes and skin (jaundice)
- swelling in the ankles and tummy
- confusion or drowsiness
- vomiting blood or passing blood in your stools

This means ARLD is frequently diagnosed during tests for other conditions, or at a stage of advanced liver damage.

If you regularly drink alcohol to excess, tell your GP so they can check if your liver is damaged.

Read more about:

- [symptoms of ARLD](#)
- [diagnosing ARLD](#)

Alcohol and the liver

With the exception of the brain, the liver is the most complex organ in the body. Its functions include:

- filtering toxins from the blood
- aiding digestion of food
- regulating blood sugar and cholesterol levels
- helping fight infection and disease

The liver is very resilient and capable of regenerating itself. Each time your liver filters alcohol, some of the liver cells die.

The liver can develop new cells, but prolonged [alcohol misuse](#) (drinking too much) over many years can reduce its ability to regenerate. This can result in serious and permanent damage to your liver.

ARLD is very common in the UK – the number of people with the condition has been increasing over the last few decades as a result of increasing levels of alcohol misuse.

Read more about the [causes of ARLD](#).

Stages of ARLD

There are 3 main stages of ARLD, although there's often an overlap between each stage. These stages are explained below.

Alcoholic fatty liver disease

Drinking a large amount of alcohol, even for just a few days, can lead to a build-up of fats in the liver. This is called alcoholic fatty liver disease, and is the first stage of ARLD.

Fatty liver disease rarely causes any symptoms, but it's an important warning sign that you're drinking at a harmful level.

Fatty liver disease is reversible. If you stop drinking alcohol for 2 weeks, your liver should return to normal.

Alcoholic hepatitis

Alcoholic hepatitis – which is unrelated to infectious hepatitis – is a potentially serious condition that can be caused by alcohol misuse over a longer period. When this develops, it may be the first time a person is aware they're damaging their liver through alcohol.

Less commonly, alcoholic hepatitis can occur if you drink a large amount of alcohol in a short period of time ([binge drinking](#)).

The liver damage associated with mild alcoholic hepatitis is usually reversible if you stop drinking permanently.

Severe alcoholic hepatitis, however, is a serious and life-threatening illness. Many people die from the condition each year in the UK, and some people only find out they have liver damage when their condition reaches this stage.

Cirrhosis

[Cirrhosis](#) is a stage of ARLD where the liver has become significantly scarred. Even at this stage, there may not be any obvious symptoms.

It's generally not reversible, but stopping drinking alcohol immediately can prevent further damage and significantly increase your life expectancy.

A person who has alcohol-related cirrhosis and doesn't stop drinking has a less than 50% chance of living for at least 5 more years.

Allergic rhinitis

Allergic rhinitis is inflammation (redness and swelling) of the inside of the nose. It's caused by an allergen, such as pollen, dust, mould, or flakes of skin from certain animals.

It's a very common condition. For most people it's easy to treat with medicines from a pharmacist.

Symptoms of allergic rhinitis

Allergic rhinitis usually causes [cold-like symptoms](#), such as:

- sneezing
- itchiness
- a blocked or runny nose

These symptoms usually start soon after coming into contact with something you're allergic to.

Some people only get allergic rhinitis seasonally because they're allergic to things like tree or grass pollen. Other people get allergic rhinitis all year round.

When to get medical advice

Speak to your GP practice if:

- you have allergic rhinitis and your symptoms get worse
- you also have asthma and it's getting worse
- your symptoms are affecting your sleep and everyday life
- you're not sure what's causing your symptoms
- treatments from a pharmacist are not working

Allergies

About allergies

An allergy is a reaction the body has to a particular food or substance.

Allergies are very common. They're thought to affect more than 1 in 4 people in the UK at some point in their lives.

They are particularly common in children. Some allergies go away as a child gets older, although many are lifelong. Adults can develop allergies to things they weren't previously allergic to.

Having an allergy can be a nuisance and affect your everyday activities, but most allergic reactions are mild and can be largely kept under control. Severe reactions can occasionally occur, but these are uncommon.

Common allergies

Substances that cause allergic reactions are called allergens. The more common allergens include:

- grass and tree pollen – an allergy to these is known as [hay fever](#) (allergic rhinitis)
- dust mites
- animal dander (tiny flakes of skin or hair)
- [food](#) – particularly nuts, fruit, shellfish, eggs and cow's milk
- [insect bites and stings](#)
- medication – including [ibuprofen](#), aspirin, and certain [antibiotics](#)
- latex – used to make some gloves and [condoms](#)

- mould – these can release small particles into the air that you can breathe in
- household chemicals – including those in detergents and hair dyes

Most of these allergens are generally harmless to people who aren't allergic to them.

Symptoms of an allergic reaction

Allergic reactions usually happen quickly within a few minutes of exposure to an allergen.

They can cause:

- sneezing
- a runny or blocked nose
- red, itchy, watery eyes
- wheezing and coughing
- a red, itchy rash
- worsening of [asthma](#) or [eczema](#) symptoms

Most allergic reactions are mild, but occasionally a severe reaction called [anaphylaxis](#) or anaphylactic shock can occur. This is a medical emergency and needs urgent treatment.

Alzheimer's disease

[Dementia](#) is an umbrella term for a range of conditions that affect different brain functions, including memory. Alzheimer's disease is the most common type of dementia.

Alzheimer's disease is most common in people over 65. But, people under 65 can also develop it.

Alzheimer's affects slightly more women than men.

Symptoms of Alzheimer's disease

Alzheimer's disease is a progressive condition. This means the symptoms develop gradually and become more severe over time.

The first sign of Alzheimer's disease is usually minor memory problems. For example, a loss of interest and enjoyment in day-to-day activities. It's also common to forget about recent conversations, events or the names of places.

As the condition develops, memory problems become more severe.

Other symptoms of Alzheimer's disease

Other changes caused by Alzheimer's disease that could cause you concern include:

- confusion, disorientation and getting lost in familiar places
- difficulty planning or making decisions
- problems with speech and language
- problems moving around without help
- difficulty performing self-care tasks
- stress and distress
- hallucinations (seeing or hearing things that aren't there)
- delusions (believing things that are untrue)
- low mood or anxiety

Anal cancer

Anal cancer is a rare type of cancer that affects the very end of the large bowel.

Symptoms of anal cancer

The symptoms of anal cancer are often similar to more common and less serious conditions affecting the anus, such as piles ([haemorrhoids](#)) and [anal fissures](#) (small tears or sores).

Symptoms of anal cancer can include:

- bleeding from the bottom (rectal bleeding)
- itching and pain around the anus
- small lumps around the anus
- a discharge of mucus from the anus
- loss of bowel control ([bowel incontinence](#))

However, some people with anal cancer don't have any symptoms.

Speak to your GP if you develop any of the above symptoms. While they're unlikely to be caused by anal cancer, it's best to get them checked out.

Anaphylaxis

About anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is a severe, potentially life-threatening allergic reaction that can develop rapidly.

It is also known as anaphylactic shock.

Signs of anaphylaxis include:

- itchy skin or a raised, red skin rash

- swollen eyes, lips, hands and feet
- feeling lightheaded or faint
- swelling of the mouth, throat or tongue, which can cause breathing and swallowing difficulties
- wheezing
- abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting
- collapse and unconsciousness

What to do

Anaphylaxis should always be treated as a medical emergency. If available, an injection of a medicine called adrenaline should be given as soon as possible.

Some people with a previous history of anaphylaxis will have an auto-injector of adrenaline.

This should be injected into their outer thigh muscle and held in place for 5 to 10 seconds. Instructions for how to use these auto-injectors can be found on the side of each device.

You should call 999 for an ambulance whether adrenaline has been given or not.

If after 5 to 10 minutes the person still feels unwell, a second injection should be given. This should be given in the opposite thigh.

A second dose may also be needed if the person improves and then becomes unwell again.

The person should lie flat, with their legs raised on a chair or a low table. If they are having difficulty breathing, they should sit up to make breathing easier.

If the person is unconscious, you should move them to the recovery position – on their side, supported by one leg and one arm, with the head tilted back and the chin lifted. If the person's breathing or heart stops, [cardiopulmonary resuscitation \(CPR\)](#) should be performed.

Further treatment will be carried out in hospital.

Read more about [treating anaphylaxis](#).

Angina

About angina

Angina is chest pain which occurs when the blood supply to the heart becomes restricted because of narrowing or blockages in the blood vessels around the heart.

Symptoms of angina

The main symptom of angina is chest pain. This can:

- feel like a dull pain, ache, 'heavy' or 'tight' feeling in your chest
- spread to your arms, neck, jaw or back
- be triggered by physical exertion

Angina itself is not life threatening, but prolonged chest pain can be a symptom of a heart attack.