

Drug-Related Adverse Effects

Possible adverse events may occur from antibiotic treatment. Even mild adverse events including vomiting, diarrhea, and nonpruritic rashes may require medical visits and additional unnecessary testing.

The adverse effects fall into 3 categories:

Toxicity

- Toxicity can occur due to improper dosing or impaired drug metabolism.

Side Effects

- Most side effects are known and generally predictable.
- Mild side effects may include vomiting, abdominal pain, diarrhea, and nonpruritic rashes, including diaper rashes.
- Severe side effects may include *C. difficile* colitis.

Allergies/Hypersensitivity Reactions

- IgE-mediated allergies may include symptoms such as hives/urticaria, angioedema, wheezing, and anaphylaxis.
- Non-IgE-mediated hypersensitivity reactions can be severe (eg, Stevens-Johnson syndrome and toxic epidermal necrolysis).

Adverse effects may result in:

- Additional laboratory testing
- Additional healthcare visits
- Out-of-pocket healthcare costs
- Possible hospitalization and may be life-threatening

It's important to distinguish an expected side effect from an allergic reaction.

Also see the document *True Antibiotic Allergies* to read a more complete discussion of antibiotic allergies.