

[<<Back](#)

SJS: Allergic Drug Reactions



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This is a story every parent should hear: Things as simple as Aspirin, Ibuprofen or even antibiotics can cause allergic reactions in your kids. It happened to Casey Okon who is only here today because she is a strong little fighter.

These days you can find four year old Casey Okon practicing her skills on the soccer field. But just two years ago Casey was very sick. "Nobody could tell us what it was and it was just, it was the worst time of our life, it really was."

After taking Ibuprofen for a fever, Casey developed flu like symptoms, a rash, and was lethargic.

"When she started to get the rash, it started just on her face and then when it started to spread to her chest and her arms that's when we decided we had to do something." The Okons rushed their daughter to the hospital where a series of tests began.

"She would wake up for periods of time and be very upset, but I couldn't tell whether she recognized me or didn't recognize me."

Days later, Caseys fever broke on it's own, and the family finally had an answer. "Stevens Johnson Syndrome. We had no idea, I don't know anybody who's had it, and had never heard of it before."

Stevens Johnson Syndrome, or SJS is a severe adverse reaction to medicine. In Casey's case, the Ibuprofen seems to have been the culprit.

Dr. Kimberly Adams says early detection is key. So parents, watch for a severe rash and fever.

"Anytime you have a rash that's unusual and rapidly progressing associated with a fever, it needs evaluation by a physician."

The message? Parents shouldn't rush to give kids medicine.

"When you're taking your child to the doctor, if the doctor deems antibiotics are necessary, I would not push for that, because antibiotics are one of the offenders causing SJS."

Back at the Okon house, Casey's illness seems far behind her. But her parents won't give their daughters Ibuprofen again.

"It's always a fear that it could happen again and from what I've read if it happened again it could be a lot worse so we feel very lucky that she's okay and that there's nothing wrong with her."

Anyone can get SJS, but it usually affects kids. In some cases the rashes are so severe, the skin begins to sluff off and patients end up in the burn unit getting treatment for their wounds. It can

also affect a patient's vision for the rest of their life.

There is no way to know if your child will get SJS. And no test can be done to find out what medicine they might react to. That's why you should be judicious about giving them any medicine. If you have to, watch for the warning signs of a rash and fever.



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