

You speak to a 23-year-old woman on the telephone. She has developed a widespread, itchy, red rash over the last four hours. She was prescribed trimethoprim yesterday for a urinary tract infection.

Which ONE of the following features is NOT a risk factor for developing an allergic drug reaction? Select ONE option only.

Select one:

- A. Previous hypersensitivity reaction to co-trimoxazole
- B. Systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE)
- C. Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection
- D. Atopic eczema
- E. Female sex

The correct answer is: Atopic eczema

Answer justification and feedback: The strongest and best-documented risk factor for drug reaction is the history of a previous reaction. Other risk factors for developing an allergic drug reaction include female sex, and SLE.

Drug allergies are frequently encountered in patients with HIV infection, particularly to certain drugs including cotrimoxazole, abacavir and nevirapine. It is likely that a complex interaction between the underlying state of immune-reconstitution and genetic host factors predisposes to these allergic drug reactions.

However, atopy does not appear to be a major risk factor for most drug allergies.