

LATEX ALLERGY

Latex allergy is an allergic reaction that develops on contact with latex, rubber.

Latex / rubber / natural latex, is obtained from the milky sap of the rubber tree (*Hevea brasiliensis*).

Types of latex allergies:

Contact dermatitis:

A poison ivy like rash / hives develops 24-48 hrs after coming in contact with latex.

SYSTEMIC ALLERGY

The latex allergy affects the whole body. The symptoms appear immediately after inhaling latex allergens, which are bound to corn-starch powder, used to lubricate some gloves. The symptoms appear in the form of hives or may develop symptoms of hay fever and asthma. Rarely severe systemic reaction may cause low blood pressure, low pulse, rapid heart beat leading to shock and death (anaphylactic shock).

CAUSES AND INCIDENCES

The exact cause for latex allergy is not known but it is seen that repeated exposure to latex and rubber can increase the sensitivity for latex.

RISK FACTORS -

- Occupational - working in factories that uses latex to make products
- Rubber industry workers
- Health care professionals, as they have to use gloves most of the time.
- Working in food packaging factories.
- Spina bifida patients.
- Patients with congenital urologic abnormalities.
- History of several surgeries.
- Myelodysplasia (irregular bone marrow cells).
- Family history of allergies - asthma, eczema, food allergies.
- History of allergies like - asthma, eczema, certain food allergies specifically of - banana, kiwi, avocado or chestnuts.

SYSTEMIC ALLERGIES

Mild -

- Conjunctivitis
- Cramps
- Hives with severe itching

Moderate -

- Rhinitis
- Asthma
- Breathlessness.

Severe -

- Rarely - anaphylactic shock
- Low blood pressure
- Low pulse
- Rapid heart beat
- Slurred speech
- Tremors
- Chest pain
- Difficulty breathing

- Loss of consciousness
- Death.

Some of the Latex Products that you can avoid:

- Rubber gloves, instead you can use synthetic gloves.
- Rubber bands
- Erasers
- Chewing gums
- Rubber grip utensils
- Tooth brush with rubber handle
- Bath mats and door mats that have rubber backing
- Rubber toys
- Balloons
- Condoms
- Adhesives - glue, paste, glue pens etc.
- Adhesive tape and bandages
- Medical and dental supplies contain latex: urinary catheters, dental dams and material used to fill root canals, tourniquets and resuscitation equipments.
- Diapers that contain rubber and sanitary pads
- Garments that have elastic rubber
- Feeding nipples and pacifiers
- Water proof bed pads that have rubber
- Bathing caps made of rubber.
- Pens with rubber grip or rubber coating
- Computer - mouse pads or wrist pads that are made of rubber.

DIETARY MANAGEMENT

Do:

- You should wear a medic alert bracelet that clearly states about your allergy.
- Always carry an emergency autoinjectable epinephrine (Epi-Pen), as an emergency in case of severe reactions, it is a life saver until you reach to the hospital. Note: this injection will be effective for only 20 minutes.
- Carry non-latex gloves and other latex alternatives for use in case of emergency.
- Inform you physician, employer and school professional about your allergy.

AVOID

- Avoid contact with all products made of latex.
- Avoid going in places where powdered gloves are used.
- Avoid going to restaurants which uses latex gloves for food preparation.
- People with latex allergy usually have cross reactions to certain foods, these foods have proteins similar to that in latex and thus the immune system reacts to them as if they are latex. This is known as cross reactive foods and people with latex allergy should avoid them.

- The foods are listed in the order of their reactivity in latex allergic individuals -

A. High level of reactivity:

- a. Banana
- b. Avocado
- c. Chestnuts
- d. Kiwi.

B. Moderate level of reactivity:

- a. Apple

- b. Carrot
- c. Celery
- d. Melon
- e. Papaya
- f. Raw potato
- g. Tomatoes.
- C. Low level of reactivity:
 - a. Apricot
 - b. Cherry
 - c. Fig
 - d. Grapes
 - e. Hazelnuts
 - f. Mango
 - g. Nectarine
 - h. Passion fruit
 - i. Peach
 - j. Milk
 - k. Pears
 - l. Pineapples
 - m. Plum
 - n. Peanut
 - o. Rye
 - p. Strawberry
 - q. Soybeans
 - r. Walnut
 - s. Mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*)
 - t. Wheat Grass
 - u. Ragweed
 - v. Coconut
 - w. Paprika.

- Avoid diet soda as they contain NutraSweet, which is made from bananas.

CONSULT PHYSICIAN

- If you see any Sign of anaphylaxis (rapid heart beat, slurred speech, tremors, difficulty in breathing) call for your doctor immediately.

NOTE : PLEASE CONTACT WITH YOUR DOCTOR FOR EXACT DIET FOR THE HEALTH PRBLEMS YOU HAVE.THIS A SAMPLE DIET CHART TO GET THE IDEA OF YOUR DAILY ROUTINE FOOD INTAKE TO MAKE YOUR LIFE HEALTHY .