

Latex Allergy

Who is at Risk?

Anybody can develop a sensitivity or an allergic reaction to latex at any time in their life, those with the greatest chance of developing an allergy are:

- Healthcare professionals and those who regularly come into contact with latex products.
- Those who are allergic to any of the following: Banana, Avocado, Chestnut, Potato, Fig, Passion Fruit, Kiwi Fruit, Tomato, Apple, Celery, Melon, Pineapple, Papaya, Grape & Milk
- Those with existing skin conditions such as eczema, other allergies such as hay fever

How to minimise the risk:

- Choose powder free gloves
- Wash your hands after wearing latex gloves and make sure that you dry your hands thoroughly
- Do not wear latex gloves for longer than necessary
- Do not use oil based hand creams or lotions with latex gloves
- Cover any breaks in the skin before donning latex gloves

If you do develop a reaction to latex cease using latex based products and seek alternatives where possible.

How to spot a reaction:

There are two main types of reaction, delayed and immediate.

- In a delayed reaction the symptoms are often an itchy, swollen, red rash that occurs after exposure to direct contact to latex
- In an immediate reaction the symptoms can vary and include rash, hives, facial swelling, respiratory distress, rhinitis, conjunctivitis, collapse and rarely, anaphylaxis.

First Aid and Treatment for Allergic Reactions:

- Recognise the symptoms of a reaction
- Promptly remove contact with the likely cause if possible
- Sit or lie the victim down
- Ensure the air way is clear, loosen restrictive clothing
- Seek urgent medical attention if the patients continues to be unwell/distressed
- Make a note of previous medical history, including any other allergies
- Assist the patient with any medication that they would normally take
- If the victim loses consciousness, place them in the recovery position and stay with them until the ambulance arrives



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