

SUBJECT: LATEX SENSITIVE PATIENT - CARE OF	REFERENCE #8107
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**POLICY:**

- All patients shall be assessed for latex sensitivity during the admitting process.
- The hospital staff shall ensure that latex-sensitive patients will not come into contact with products made of latex.
- Patients without a documented latex allergy but who have a predisposition for a reaction because of conditions such as myelomeningocele/meningocele, spina bifida or urogenital malformations shall be closely monitored for the occurrence of latex allergy symptoms. Staff shall limit the use of latex products in this population.

**GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS:**

- Latex exposure can cause a local allergic reaction. Symptoms of a local reaction might be itching, redness or urticaria.
- Latex exposure may cause a systemic anaphylactic reaction. A systemic reaction might manifest as difficulty in breathing, anxiety, palpitations, chest tightness and pain, hypotension, facial and peripheral edema and shock. Even a trivial exposure may result in a cardiorespiratory arrest.
- Patients at high-risk for latex sensitivity include:
  - Patients with neural tube defects (i.e., myelomeningocele or spina bifida).
  - Patients with chronic bladder catheterizations.
  - Patients with occupational exposure (i.e., workers in the latex industry and healthcare workers).
  - Patients that have had multiple operations.
  - Patients with a history of atopy and multiple allergies.
  - Those patients with a history of an allergic reaction after touching balloons, rubber gloves or powder from rubber gloves, dental dams, latex consumer products and medical devices.

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- Patients with a history of:
  - Asthma
  - Hay fever
  - Allergy to:

Degree of Association or Prevalence			
High	Moderate	Low or Undetermined	
Avocados	Apples	Apricots	Peaches
Bananas	Carrots	Buckwheat	Peanuts
Chestnuts	Celery	Castor beans	Pears
Kiwi	Melons	Cayenne peppers	Persimmons
	Papaya	Cherries	Pineapples
	Potatoes	Chickpeas	Plums
	Tomatoes	Citrus fruits	Rye
		Coconuts	Sage
		Dill	Shellfish
		Figs	Soybeans
		Grapes	Strawberries
		Hazelnuts	Sunflower seeds
		Lychee	Sweet peppers
		Mangos	Walnuts
		Nectarines	Wheat
		Oregano	Zucchini
		Passion fruit	

- Those patients that have experienced an anaphylactic reaction during surgery, urinary catheterization, rectal or vaginal examination and/or bladder stimulation.

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**PROCEDURE:**

- For those patients with latex sensitivity:
  - An allergic sticker shall be placed on the front of the chart. The words "Latex Allergy" shall be posted on the patient's bed and on the patient's door.
  - Order a latex-free cart from Central Services.
  - Latex products shall be removed from the patient's room.
  - A list of the most commonly used latex products and their substitutes shall be available to those providing care in the patient care units/departments.
  - Non-latex products shall be substituted for those products containing latex.
  - Notify Pharmacy that the patient is allergic to latex. IV medications are to be given via a glass syringe. Remove rubber stoppers from vials before drawing up medications.
  - Use IV tubing without latex ports. DO NOT inject or withdraw fluid through a latex port.
  - Blood work shall be drawn using glass syringes and a latex-free tourniquet.
  - All staff shall wear powder-free non-latex gloves at all times when caring for the patient.
  - Environmental Services shall use only powder-free non-latex gloves for cleaning.
  - Monitor the patient for any signs of an allergic reaction, such as rash, hives, eye tearing/itching, wheezing, shortness of breath, nausea, vomiting, faintness, etc.
  - Injectable epinephrine and Benadryl shall be readily available in the case of inadvertent exposure.

**REFERENCE:**

American Latex Allergy Association (ALAA), *Cross Reactive Food*, A Compilation from the Literature Contributed by Tom Grier, <http://latexallergyresources.org/cross-reactive-food>, last accessed May 2015