

Feedback

We appreciate and encourage feedback. If you need advice or are concerned about any aspect of care or treatment please speak to a member of staff or contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS):

Freephone: 0800 183 0204

From a mobile or abroad: 0115 924 9924 ext 65412 or 62301

E-mail: pals@nuh.nhs.uk

Letter: NUH NHS Trust, c/o PALS, Freepost NEA 14614, Nottingham NG7 1BR

www.nuh.nhs.uk

Latex allergy

Information for parents

The Trust endeavours to ensure that the information given here is accurate and impartial.

This leaflet has been adapted from the leaflet produced for the adult immunology department.
Original leaflet produced by Lisa Slater.

This information can be provided in different languages and formats. For more information please contact the:

Children's Clinic
Tel: 0115 9249924 ext. 62661/64008



Latex allergy

It is the latex (sap) that comes from the rubber tree *Hevea Braziliensis* that causes allergy.

Both children and adults can be affected by latex allergy.

The condition is more common in atopic people (those who have a tendency to develop allergies) and those who have lots of contact with latex.

Reactions to latex

There are two types of allergic reactions to latex. These are known as type I and type IV (4) reactions

Type-1 is an immediate reaction to the natural proteins in latex.

Mild symptoms may include:

- Nasal irritation
- Itching
- Redness of the skin
- Urticaria (nettle rash or hives)
- Swelling
- Cough

Symptoms in severe cases may include:

- Wheeze
- Anaphylaxis (throat swelling / choking, breathing difficulty and collapse)

People at risk of severe reactions should carry preloaded adrenaline (EpiPen/Jext) at all times in order to treat one of these severe reactions.

The Latex Allergy Support Group can also provide support.
The Latex Allergy Support Group
P.O. Box 27
Filey
YO14 9YH

www.lasg.org.uk

Visit these websites to access a free demonstration of EpiPen or Jext.

EpiPen
www.epipen.co.uk

Jext
www.jext.co.uk

School/Nursery

Contact the school nurse (children's nurse attached to health visiting team for nurseries) to arrange Epipen/Jext and anaphylaxis training for the school or nursery. If you have any problems, please contact Debra Forster.

Additional support

Contact details

Debra Forster, Children's Respiratory & Allergy Nurse
Children's Clinic South
B Floor, Nottingham Children's Hospital
Queen's Medical Centre
Nottingham NG7 2UH

Tel: 0115 9249924 ext 62501

The Anaphylaxis Campaign is a national charity that can provide support and information.

The Anaphylaxis Campaign
P.O. Box 275
Farnborough
Hampshire
GU14 6SX

Helpline: 01252 542029
www.anaphylaxis.org.uk

If you have been told you need an Epipen/Jext in clinic today you should have been shown how to use it. If you have not been shown how to use it, please contact Debra Forster (details on page 6). You should also carry an antihistamine to treat mild reactions.

If you use an Epipen/Jext you must always call an ambulance.

Type IV (4) is a delayed reaction to the chemicals used in the manufacturing process of latex.

Symptoms include:

- Reddening of skin
- Itching and swelling of the skin developing six hours to two days after contact, usually in the area which had contact.

The treatment of type IV (4) is removal of the latex-containing product and the use of creams.

Management of latex allergy

Generally people with latex allergy should avoid latex. People who are allergic to latex may react to the following:

- Rubber gloves
- Balloons
- Rubber toys
- Rubber bands
- Pencil erasers
- Latex mattresses and pillows
- Condoms
- Baby teats and dummies
- Sports equipment (e.g. hand grips, gym mats)
- Swimming caps and goggles
- Adhesives
- Some medical equipment

Most people with latex allergy will not react to dry rubber latex such as shoe soles, tyres and water bottles. This is because stretchy products contain more proteins than the harder rubber products.

Some people with mild latex allergy may be able to use some latex products. They may also be able to use some brands of products and not others as different companies will use varying manufacturing processes that alter the nature of the latex protein.

People with severe allergy should not use any latex products.

Latex and fruit allergy

Some people allergic to latex also experience reactions to some foods. These may include fruits such as banana, avocado, kiwi and chestnut. This is because proteins in these foods are similar to those in latex and can therefore cause a reaction. If you currently eat these foods without any problems you should continue to do so.

Inform people about your allergy

Whether you have type-1 or type-4 reactions to latex it is essential that you inform people about your allergy, particularly health care professionals such as the dentist, GP or hospital staff. If you are having any kind of surgery or procedure it is essential that you give information about your latex allergy. If medical staffs are aware of your allergy there are alternative products and equipment that can be used.

There are also alternatives to everyday latex items.

You may want to consider wearing a **medical alert bracelet** to inform people of your allergy if at any time you are unable to do so. For example, if you were treated in an emergency and were unconscious.