

How should you manage a reaction?

A written management plan will be provided and appropriate medication prescribed which should be available at all times. If a reaction occurs remove the offending object and give an antihistamine as soon as possible.

Severe symptoms:

- Difficulty breathing (wheezing, noisy breathing)
- Swelling in the throat (noisy breathing, drooling)
- Feeling faint or dizzy, looking very pale (lie the child down with their legs raised).

If any of these severe symptoms occur get help straight away and dial 999 stating “anaphylaxis” (ana-fil-ak-sis).

Who needs to know about this allergy?

It is important to inform the nursery/school. Any other carers will also need to know. Dentists and doctors should be told so that they can avoid using latex gloves for procedures and operations.

Is latex allergy life long?

Most children with latex allergy will not outgrow the problem. The main latex products that should be avoided are: balloons, condoms and powdered latex gloves. For dental procedures and operations, non-latex gloves can be used as an alternative.

Is there a cure?

There is no cure for latex allergy at present but research is underway which may lead to the development of new treatments.

Contact information



Latex allergy

Information for parents and carers

www.allergynorthwest.nhs.uk

References

Position Paper. Latex Allergy BSACI, Clin Exp Allergy, 2003
RCPCH care pathway: [www.rcpch.ac.uk/system/files/protected/page/2011_RCPCH-CarePathway-LatexAllergy_v3_\(11.9\).pdf](http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/system/files/protected/page/2011_RCPCH-CarePathway-LatexAllergy_v3_(11.9).pdf)

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Latex allergy Guidelines - North West Paediatric Allergy Implementation Group
Information should be used in conjunction with advice from a medical professional

What is latex and who is likely to develop latex allergy?

Latex is natural rubber, which comes from the *Hevea brazillensis* tree, grown mainly in South East Asia. Latex allergy is uncommon in the general population affecting less than 1 in a 1,000 people. It is however more common in children with eczema, especially those with hand eczema, as well as asthma and hay fever.

Children needing multiple operations, particularly in the first year of life, for example those with spina bifida and kidney problems, are most at risk of developing allergy to latex. Powdered latex gloves were previously a common source of sensitisation.

What are the symptoms of latex allergy?

Immediate reactions occur within 30 minutes of exposure and can include a rash ('nettle' rash) or swelling. Severe reactions (anaphylaxis) are less common, but include difficulty breathing (wheeze or swelling in the throat), feeling faint or dizzy.

Delayed reaction usually develop hours later due to a reaction to **chemical additives** used to improve the durability of the rubber products (sulphur or peroxide vulcanisers or anti-oxidants).

How serious is latex allergy?

Most children have mild reactions. Severe reactions affecting the child's breathing can occur, particularly in those with bad asthma and these need urgent medical attention.

Are there any associated food allergies?

Children can be allergic to latex alone, or may also be allergic to foods, particularly **banana, kiwi, avocado, tomato and chestnut**. Seek medical advice before excluding any of these foods as this may not be necessary.

How do we diagnose latex allergy?

The diagnosis is based on a history of a typical reaction after exposure to latex-containing products (particularly balloons and gloves).

Your allergist may do a blood or skin prick test to support the diagnosis if the reaction was immediate. Skin prick tests are safe. They can be done in clinic provided that the child has not had any antihistamines for a few days. Blood tests are not affected by antihistamines, but results are only available a week or so after the clinic appointment.

How to avoid latex?

Stretchy rubber products like balloons, gloves and rubber bands are more likely to cause a reaction than 'hard' ones such as rubber stoppers, dummies and erasers.

Dentists and doctors should be informed so that non-latex gloves can be used for procedures and operations.

Some individuals prefer to wear medic alert bracelets to alert doctors in emergency situations of their allergy.

References

Position Paper. Latex Allergy BSACI, Clin Exp Allergy, 2003

RCPCH care pathway: [www.rcpch.ac.uk/system/files/protected/page/2011_RCPCH-CarePathway-LatexAllergy_v3_\(11.9\).pdf](http://www.rcpch.ac.uk/system/files/protected/page/2011_RCPCH-CarePathway-LatexAllergy_v3_(11.9).pdf)

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