

# Understanding Natural Rubber Latex Allergy



## LIFETHREATENING

### Type I allergy (latex proteins)

A sensitisation to the extractable latex proteins in natural rubber latex

B-cell mediated IgE immediate systemic response (5-30 minutes)

The items above are similar in protein content and if an individual is allergic to any of these, suspicion re. Latex allergy is strongly advised. Patient screening is essential prior to any intervention.

Individuals with spina bifida, urological or multiple surgery are particularly susceptible.

## NONLIFETHREATENING

### Type IV allergy (chemicals)

A sensitisation to the chemicals used in manufacturing

T-cell mediated delayed localised response (6-48 hours). Allergy to chemicals used to manufacture both Latex and synthetic gloves

Difficult to manage as specific chemicals hard to identify. Thiurams are particularly sensitising

### Symptoms

Rash, breathlessness, asthma, hypotension, swelling of the lips and tongue, risk of anaphylaxis



### Management

Staff and patients avoid exposure to all Latex products

Staff report allergy to OH and line manager

Patients to be identified with allergy sticker and flagged on IT system

Wear allergy alert bracelet or necklace

Inform all relevant people- GP, dentist, etc.

### Diagnosis

Diagnosis can be elicited by patch testing, blood tests and skin prick tests

### Symptoms

Rash localised to hands and wrists, eczema. In severe cases, it can spread further



### Management

Staff report allergy to OH and line manager

Change to looser fitting gloves

Change to a glove using different chemical accelerators

### Diagnosis

Diagnosis can be elicited by patch testing

n.b. It is specifically an allergen in natural rubber latex from the hevea brasiliensis tree that causes natural rubber latex allergy. Please do not confuse with other "rubbers"