



The American Latex Allergy Association and Kimberly-Clark to Promote Latex Allergy Awareness

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? Educational resources made available at no cost to healthcare professionals?

(MILWAUKEE, WI and ROSWELL, Ga. ? SEPTEMBER 13, 2004) - The American Latex Allergy Association (ALAA) and Kimberly-Clark Health Care are teaming up to promote awareness and education of latex allergy and the alternatives to natural rubber latex products available to health care professionals. The ALAA and Kimberly-Clark are distributing ?Latex Allergy Alert? kits in observance of Latex Allergy Awareness Week, October 3rd through the 9th.

The Latex Allergy Alert kits are available at no cost to health care facilities and include valuable components, such as:

- **Kimberly-Clark FirstHAND* on Glove-Associated Reactions** - The Knowledge Network* FirstHAND* series was first developed in 1993 and today covers a wide range of glove-related topics including glove-associated reactions, barrier protection, powder complications, and glove selection.
- **Posters** - 11 x 17 posters with information on latex allergy symptoms, identification of individuals who are most susceptible to developing a latex allergy, and statistics on the prevalence of latex allergies in health care workers and the general population.
- **Allergy Bands** - Latex Allergy ID bands in a distinctive purple color to be worn by latex allergic patients.
- **Latex-free Resource Guide** - Contains a list of latex-free health care products offered by Kimberly-Clark, as well as answers to frequently asked questions about latex allergies.
- **Sample of Purple Nitrile* gloves** - Purple Nitrile* exam gloves are the leading latex-free alternative in the U.S.

The goal of Latex Allergy Awareness Week is to reinforce the importance of issues-based education around Type 1 glove-associated latex allergies. During Latex Allergy Awareness Week, Kimberly-Clark will be providing educational programs on latex allergies at health care facilities throughout the country. ?We take every opportunity available to share the wealth of clinical knowledge we've acquired as a result of many years of developing innovative products that help protect both patients and staff,? said Wava Truscott, PhD, director of clinical education and scientific affairs for Kimberly-Clark Health Care.

In order to avoid the risk of developing a Type 1 glove-associated latex allergy, it is recommended that health care workers wear synthetic gloves made of nitrile or vinyl, as well as latex-free facial protection and other protective

apparel. For patient contact, use of latex-free devices such as blood pressure cuffs is recommended. "We receive about 200 telephone and 4000 website inquiries per month from health care professionals and people who suffer from latex allergy asking for recommendations on safe products to use," said ALAA Executive Director, Sue Lockwood.

"Latex allergies are a significant health threat to those who are latex sensitive," said Truscott. "We've spent a huge amount of time and effort to minimize the latex protein content of our powder-free latex gloves and equal effort developing clinically superior latex-free products like Purple Nitrile* exam gloves."

Beyond focusing on providing latex-free product alternatives, Kimberly-Clark also spends significant efforts educating health care workers. So it's not surprising that Kimberly-Clark Health Care is a big supporter of the ALAA. To that end, Kimberly-Clark Health Care has delivered more than 10,000 copies of its popular Knowledge Network* FirstHAND* educational materials to the ALAA's resource bank. "Sponsors like Kimberly-Clark are valued partners in our efforts to support our members," said Lockwood. "The quality of their information and their generosity is much appreciated."

Hospitals and other health care facilities can request a Latex Allergy Alert kit online from Kimberly-Clark at www.kchealthcare.com/latexawareness [1] or from the ALAA at www.latexallergyresources.org [2].

About Kimberly-Clark Health Care Every day, one in four people around the world trusts Kimberly-Clark brands to enhance health, hygiene and well-being. Health care providers depend on Kimberly-Clark Health Care for a broad portfolio of products that help protect both patients and those who care for them. This \$1 billion global enterprise manufactures and markets sterilization wrap and pouches, along with surgical drapes, gowns, personal protective apparel, face masks and gloves, providing head-to-toe protection for health care workers. Beyond protective apparel, the company is also a leader in several medical device categories. These include closed suction systems for respiratory care, enteral feeding systems, patient warming systems, and endoscopy and pain management products and accessories. For more information, please visit <http://www.kchealthcare.com/> [3].

About the American Latex Allergy Association Founded in 1993, the American Latex Allergy Association is a national non-profit, tax-exempt organization that provides information about latex allergy and supports latex-allergic individuals. Originally, the organization was formed by a group of approximately 30 health care workers who acquired latex allergies and sought to provide information and support for one another, as well as to other persons and organizations. The original name **A.L.E.R.T.**, Inc. continues to reflect its mission: Allergy to Latex Education and Resource Team. The mission of the American Latex Allergy Association is to create awareness of latex allergies through education and to provide support to individuals who have been diagnosed with a latex allergy.

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Links:

[1] <http://www3.kchealthcare.com/latexawareness/>

[2] <http://latexallergyresources.org/>

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[4] <mailto:cfoster@trone.com>