American Latex Allergy Association

What are the most effective ways I can provide information to emergency medical personnel regarding my latex allergy?

Answered by
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?Attention, Cedarburg Fire Rescue Squad, rescue squad had been requested at 1234 Bee Hive Lane for a 30 year-old female having an allergic reaction. Be advised, the patient is listed in the Alert File Booklet.?

While in route, we check our files for more information on this patient. We discover she is also allergic to latex. Our first priority is to take universal precautions by donning non-latex gloves, goggles, mask and gown or jumpsuit. As we approach we are already assessing the patient?s airway, breathing and circulation. Our examination reveals that the patient is disoriented, weak, short-of-breath, pale, has a rapid pulse and low blood pressure. Upon further examination, we discover a medical alert bracelet on her left wrist. Medical treatment is rendered and patient is transported to the nearest hospital emergency room.

The scenario of this rescue call is not unlike those faced by many emergency medical services throughout the United States. The successful outcome of this rescue call was due to the following:

1. The patient notified her local rescue squad of her latex allergy.
2. The rescue squad had education and training regarding latex allergy.
3. The rescue squad had latex-free equipment.

For the Cedarburg Fire Department, quality patient care is our number one priority. All of our rescue equipment is up-to-date and latex-free. There is no delay in rendering care to any of our patients, including those with a latex allergy. The comprehensive medical information we had on file for this patient as well as our latex-free equipment enabled us to successfully complete this rescue call. Patients themselves, need to be aware of the importance of medical alert identification, as well as notifying local emergency medical services of their allergies. Individuals with life-threatening allergies need to understand the ?red flag? significance of the medical alert bracelet or I.D. tag.

In an emergency, a bystander may be the first to assist a victim; unknowingly using items that could be life-threatening to the patient. Also, the person needing emergency care could be away from their home, and the rescue personnel may not have access to their medical information. It is vital that a latex allergic individual wear their medical alert identification at all times. This is important when traveling, shopping and while at home. It can speak for you when you cannot.

We, at 911, are here for you, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Help us to help you by keeping us informed of your

medical needs and by wearing your medical alert identification.

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For more information see the American Latex Allergy Association (A.L.E.R.T., Inc.) Publication: Guidelines for the Emergency Care of the Latex Allergic Patient

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