American Latex Allergy Association

Cathy's Story

I found out about my allergy when I made water balloons for my daughters. My eye doctor actually diagnosed my allergy first. It wasn?t until 3 years later when I was in a first aid class for my employer that I realized just how serious my allergy was. I worked for a local school district and the nurses who were giving the class asked if anyone was allergic to latex. I raised my hand and said yes. Their response was okay, we won?t give you any glove. We didn?t really know that the powder would get me. I became the patient in that class.

When I finally visited the allergist, we tried to figure out how I ended up with this allergy. I do not work in the medical field, nor have I ever worked in the medical field. The only things we can come up with are the fact that my father is a mechanic and I spent many years around rubber belts, hoses and tires, and the fact that when I was 16 my family and I chopped down our neighbor?s rubber tree. The combination of these two items are what we believe caused my allergy.

I have since had several trips to the hospital. Many were provided by my husband because in the beginning of my allergy, our ambulances were still full of latex items. I remember the day the nurse at the ER tried to chastise my husband for driving me. When he explained to her about the ambulance situation and he wasn?t willing to put me in a very closed, confined space full of the stuff that could kill me, he would rather drive me himself, she got very quiet.

This is a relatively brief synopsis of my allergy. I was diagnosed in 1997, and am still alive (albeit barely from a couple of reactions).

Cathy

ALAA note: It is not always possible or important to determine what caused the sensitization. Many times this can lead to inaccurate conclusions. What is important is that you have been diagnosed with Latex Allergy.

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Reprinted from

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Website: www.latexallergyresources.org

Source URL: http://latexallergyresources.org/cathys-story