



Laura's Story

I am (was) a health care worker and I was recently forced to leave the field because of a progressive latex allergy. I was diagnosed 2 years ago with a contact allergy which was reasonably easy to control. However, in the past month, I had 2 reactions in which I started to experience respiratory symptoms. I was informed by my employer that I could not be allowed to return to work because there was no way they could protect me from environmental exposure. The Occupational Health and Risk Management departments made this decision on June 20, 2011. June 15, 2011 was the last day I was allowed to work.

I understand and respect that this company has my best interest in mind. I was not terminated. Instead, I was advised to apply for FMLA, which I did, until STD begins after being out for 42 consecutive days. After 6 months, LTD will begin. At this point, after doing a great deal of research, I am at a loss as to what to do. I have started the process of applying for SSD through the Social Security Administration. However, I could not find any specific information regarding people with severe latex allergy and whether or not I would qualify. Since I have worked in health care for my entire career, there is no doubt that I would have to return to either a technical college or university to seek further education in another field. During that time, I would need income for support.

My question is: how is a severe environmental latex allergy handled? Latex is everywhere and impossible to avoid completely. I was very surprised to see the vast number of products that contain latex, especially in common household items. My family and I have removed as many of these items as possible from our residence. We keep a supply of nitrile gloves in our house as well. I do not eat any foods that contain proteins that can cause cross-reactions. I have antihistamines, epi-pens and a steroid ointment that I keep with me at all times in the event that there is an exposure.

Any information you could provide me with would be much appreciated. While I completely understand my employer's decision, I am upset and do not know where to turn or what to do. Thank you.

Laura D

.

Reprinted from

American Latex Allergy Association

P.O. Box 198

Slinger, WI 53086

Phone: 262-677-9707 1-888-97-ALERT

Website: www.latexallergyresources.org

Source URL: <http://latexallergyresources.org/lauras-story>

