American Latex Allergy Association

Peggy's Story

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Since it is Latex Allergy Awareness Week, 2012, I thought I would finally share part of my story.

I have been diagnosed since 1998. It was hard at first but life is a tad easier now. Except for the fact that I was almost killed at a ?latex safe hospital? this past winter. My husband was critically ill and when I finally asked about latex I was met with blank stares. The next day I called administration and their safety officer told me they were a latex safe facility. He notified the floor of my husband?s sensitivity and my anaphylaxis. Things did not go well. By the end of the first week I knew latex was being used by the way I felt. Finally two brave nurses took me aside and said that latex gloves were actively being used in close proximity to my husband?s room. That explained so much. I called my allergist and he was none too pleased. He banned me from re-entering the hospital even though my husband was critically ill. He said he didn?t want both of us dying. The hardest thing I had to do was be away from my husband for two weeks when he needed me the most. I lived in my car, did my emergency treatments for my asthma, etc in the car. They FINALLY came up with a plan for the E.R. if I needed a higher level of intervention. I cannot believe how close I came to my life ending. I cannot believe I wasn?t allowed to be with my husband when he needed me the most. They had him signing forms he had no idea what they were. They promised to call me and talk to me in the parking lot; that was a joke. The only good thing that came from this is after a visit from JCAHO and a complaint to the ADA they have changed over and are almost a latex safe hospital now. Not that it matters for us. We will never go there again. All the negative things that happened have turned in to teachable moments for the staff, that makes us feel like we made an impact on some level and maybe safer for the next patient or visitor who comes along with a latex allergy.

Never trust anyone who tells you it is latex safe unless they are from administration (even though this guy was). Ask to see the policy and procedure manual, even if it is an emergency admission. They say they are sorry & put it in writing but that doesn?t really help when my husband is now living a life of quantity not quality, his desired wishes. I hate this allergy & I hate the latex gloves that gave it to me. I am very disappointed with the FDA as their head is buried deep in the sand when it comes to NRLA. I will never give up my fight for latex safe hospitals state wide then nationwide. Right now my focus is on my husband and his special needs; I will get back to the NRLA fight when I can.

Peggy

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