American Latex Allergy Association

Rachel's Story

I was diagnosed with latex allergy 7 years ago, after the birth of my third child. At that point, with all the check-ups in the last months of pregnancy, I was such a mess that my OB/GYN determined to induce labor, so that he could hand me over to my allergist for whatever I needed. As it turned out, I needed a lot. I have Type I reactions, meaning that I start wheezing, then stop breathing, to even small amounts of latex. During one not-well-remembered year, I took 60 Epi-pens in 6 months.

But my needs are manageable. I am a CPA, and it is now fairly easy to find latex-free rubber bands and erasers.

My children are a lot harder. Our school system will not admit to latex being a serious cause for concern. We were forced, after trying for two years to work with the school, to remove our daughter and home-school her. We will probably have to home-school our youngest son, as well.

So I am a CPA. And a wife and mother. And a teacher.

My daughter is also developing Type I reactions. I have tried, very unsuccessfully, to find latex-free clothing for us both. I challenge anyone to find, on a budget, women?s clothing that is not stretch or stain-resistant. The one source I had for undergarments was designed for, well, not my body type. They?ve gone back to latex elastic anyways. Socks are outrageous, and wear out oh-so-quickly. My youngest just turned 3, so I handle his clothes quite a bit, which means they must be latex-free. Good-bye cloth diapers and rubber pants. Thank goodness for Huggies. Now what do I do for his undergarments?

So I am a CPA. And a wife and mother. And a teacher. And a full-time seamstress.

Sometimes, when I am really frustrated, I go to the local mall. Most of the salespeople are very attentive, and rush right up to ask how they can help me. I describe my allergy, and my clothing needs, and sit back and watch, knowing full well that in 15 minutes, someone will return and regretfully suggest another store. It?s only 15 minutes, but sometimes it helps to give the problem to someone else for a while.

Rachel

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American Latex Allergy Association
P.O. Box 198
Slinger, WI 53086
Phone: 262-677-9707 1-888-97-ALERT
Website: www.latexallergyresources.org

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