American Latex Allergy Association

# Tracy's Story

When I was a dental assistant back in the ?80?s, I didn?t wear gloves very often.  Then recommendations and regulations changed that required me to wear gloves all the time.  I never had any problems with any type of reactions or anything while I was only wearing gloves occasionally.  When I started wearing gloves consistently, I started to notice little cracks starting to appear on my hands.  I just thought it was from the cold and never really gave it any thought.  Soon, my hands started getting little bumps on them in addition to the cracks and also my hands were red.  This progressed to not only the bumps and cracks,  they started to bleed.  I still never really associated this with the gloves that I was wearing.  Some time later, I think I went to a doctor for something and mentioned about the problems that I had with my hands.  He immediately told me that I probably had a sensitivity to the latex in the gloves and should stop wearing them. I went to work and ordered the latex-free gloves after getting approval because theses gloves are more expensive than regular latex gloves.  After I started wearing these gloves I started to notice a difference in my hands.  The little bumps, redness, and cracks started to disappear.  I continued to wear latex free gloves throughout my career as a dental assistant, surgical technologist, and later, sterile processing technician.  I have never had another incidence of any type of allergy since.  I do, however, worry since I do have a sensitivity to becoming very allergic to latex.  I don?t really do anything to avoid it right now.  I guess I?ll know in the future if I start experiencing any symptoms of a latex allergy (sneezing, hard time breathing or anything else) I should start looking for what the cause may be.  I will then try to avoid whatever set of the allergic reaction.  Until that time,  I probably won?t be as careful as I should.
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