

Powder-Free Gloves Reduce Symptoms, Cost in Study

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Switching to low-protein, powder-free surgical gloves reduced symptoms related to latex exposure and saved \$10,000 in a 2-year longitudinal study at a university medical center.

In all, 82 OR staff members completed the study, which covered 6 months before and 21 months after glove conversion. Latex-related symptoms declined significantly from 44% of the OR staff to 27%. There was no significant difference in severe or lower respiratory symptoms.

An increase in glove costs was offset by savings in health care costs, new employee screening, storeroom and handling costs, and prevention of workers' compensation claims. Employee adherence to the conversion was encouraged by eliminating outside vendors and centralizing glove ordering.

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