LATEX ALLERGY...It’s more than just the GLOVES!  

FACT SHEET

More than 40,000 Medical and Consumer Products contain natural rubber latex

- Latex gloves have always been known to be the (main) primary sensitizer* for latex allergy. Highlighted are other items that can also be a sensitizer for latex allergy.
- Dipped products- Latex products are made either by pouring the rubber into molds or by forming a coating in a dipped process, as is done with gloves, balloons and condoms. Dipped; or very soft, rubber products appear to have the highest content of latex proteins and, therefore, have the greatest allergenic potential.
- Cornstarch powder is applied to products during the manufacturing process to prevent stickiness and give them smooth feel. Latex protein particles have been shown to adhere to the surface of these cornstarch particles and to make them airborne.

*All of these products contain Natural Rubber Latex Proteins

**Balloons:** Latex balloons are a significant source of natural rubber latex allergen exposure. A broad range of natural rubber latex protein allergen levels are found in latex balloons, making it important to avoid exposure to balloons.

**Banana, Avocado, Kiwi, and chestnut:** Cross-reactive† fruit- Ingestion of some foods produce allergic symptoms in patients sensitive to latex inhalation or contact due to the presence of these common or cross-reactive protein allergens. Foods should not be avoided unless symptoms develop.

**Koosh Balls®:** The balls consist of several thousand natural rubber filaments. There are many other Koosh-related products, including key rings, baseball sets, and yo-yos. Millions of Koosh® balls have been sold.

**Red Rubber Catheter:** Most catheters produced are latex-free, with the exception of Foley and Red Urethral.

**Rubber Accelerators:** Rubber accelerators are chemicals used to speed up the manufacturing process of rubber. This process makes untreated natural rubber latex suitable for use in the manufacture of many rubber products. Thiurams, carbamates, sulfonamides and mercaptobenzothiazole chemicals are the most common rubber additive chemicals to cause contact dermatitis. Nearly all rubber compounds contain rubber accelerators.

**Elastics:** An elastic material from the latex sap of trees (especially trees of the genera Hevea and Ficus) that can be vulcanized and finished into a variety of products. Synthetic elastic such as elastane or neoprene do not contain the proteins from the Hevea brasiliensis tree that trigger type I reactions.

**Erasers:** Erasers are made from either natural rubber latex or synthetic rubber latex. Products should be verified with the company.

**RUBBER BANDS:** Rubber bands are primarily manufactured using natural rubber latex.

**Therapy bands:** Standard therapy resistive bands and tubing are made of natural rubber latex. They also contain powder that makes the latex proteins airborne.

**Condoms:** Latex condoms can cause a severe latex reaction. Use synthetic condoms made of polyurethane. Polyurethane condoms are available as male condoms and female condoms.

**Latex Mattresses:** Contain natural rubber latex proteins; individuals with Natural Rubber Latex allergy should avoid using one.

**Bandage Adhesive:** Natural Rubber Latex and rubber accelerators (see above) are used as adhesives in products such as some bandages and packaging. Look for warnings labels on packaging of medical supplies. Most non-medical consumer products are not labeled and must be verified.

*Sensitizer: A substance that sensitizes the skin on first contact so that subsequent contact causes an allergic reaction.

†Cross-reactive: Allergic to latex and also may be allergic to some foods from different plants from the same plant family. (The reaction between an antigen and an antibody that was generated against a different but similar antigen.)

For more information on Latex Products see: www.latexallergyresources.org/latex-free-products

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