

# WHAT IS A LATEX ALLERGY?

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Latex allergy is a medical term encompassing a range of allergic reactions to the proteins present in natural rubber latex.

A latex allergy generally develops after repeated exposure to products containing natural rubber latex.

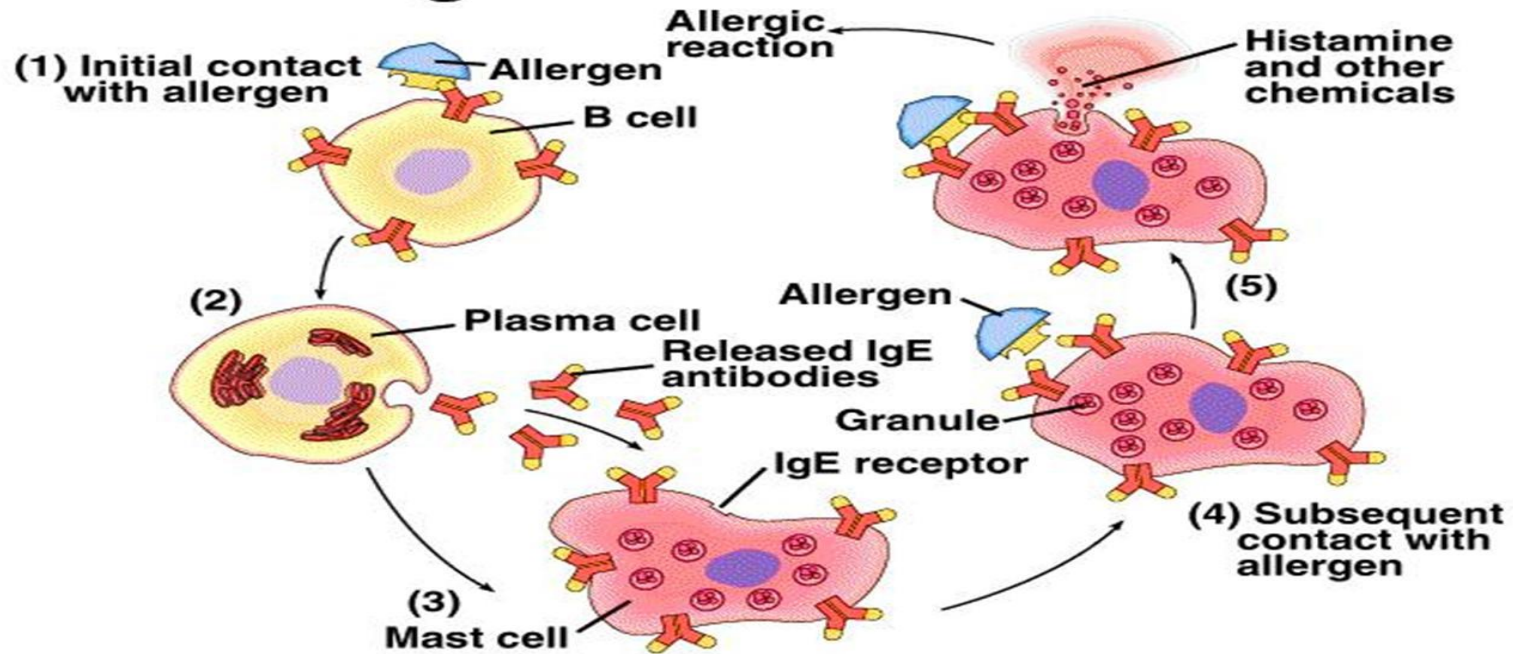


# HOW DO YOU DEVELOP A LATEX ALLERGY

- Your immune system identifies latex as a harmful substance and your immune system triggers certain cells to produce immunoglobulin E (IgE) antibodies to fight the latex component (the allergen).
- The next time you come in contact with latex, the IgE antibodies sense it and signal your immune system to release histamine and other chemicals into your bloodstream.
- The more exposure you have, the more your immune system is likely to respond to latex (sensitization).

# THIS IS HOW THE ALLERGIC RESPONSE WORKS:

## An Allergic Reaction — Overview



<http://www.google.co.uk/imgres?num=10&hl=en&client=firefox-a&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&biw=1366&bih=649&tbnm=isch&tbnid=nIz9aGV9sdrm2kM:&imgrefurl=http://blog.nutri-living.com/%3Fp%3D588&docid=384SbN9OQAJT7M&imgurl=http://blog.nutri-living.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/allergicresponse1.jpg&w=640&h=480&ei=mL6KT->

## **INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE MOST LIKELY TO EXHIBIT A SENSITIVITY TO LATEX MAY RESULT IN VARYING DEGREE OF REACTIVITY ARE:**

- Those who possess a known or suspected allergy to latex by having exhibited an allergic or anaphylactic reaction, positive skin testing, or positive IgE antibodies against latex.
- Those with documented history of intraoperative anaphylaxis of unknown etiology.
- Those with neural tube defects including: Spina bifida and Myelomeningocele.
- Those who have experienced some interaction between their central nervous and immune systems.
- Those who possess some history of hypersensitivity to multiple food products. Particular sensitive to fruits and vegetables including bananas, avocado, celery, fig, chestnut, papaya and passion fruit.
- Individuals who have experienced a significant degree or repeated exposure to latex products are more likely to develop a latex allergy.

## SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF ALLERGIC REACTIONS TO LATEX

- ❖ Latex symptoms usually occur within 30 minutes following Latex exposure; however, the actual onset can range from 10-290 minutes (Almost 5 hours). Beginning with minor symptoms:

Itchy, watery eyes



# FLUSHING /FACIAL EDEMA



**SHORTNESS OF BREATH/ FEELING OF IMPENDING DOOM / FEELING OF FAINTNESS  
HYPOTENSION > BLOOD PRESSURES IS LESS THAN 120/80 MM HG.**





# UNEXPLAINED RESTLESSNESS / AGITATION

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Th061VIG3uE>

Nausea & Vomiting > Abdominal cramping > Diarrhea

# GENERALIZED PRURITUS/URTICARIA / DERMATITIS

5th May 2002



# SEVER SYMPTOMS: ANAPHYLAXIS

Wheezing / Laryngeal edema / Brochospasm

<http://www.easyauscultation.com/cases-waveform.aspx?coursecaseorder=4&courseid=201>

Tachycardia

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9RNhr36KIW0&list=PLA5d0s1TS00r5h6ig3Fxp\\_FOMrNSpybWL&index=10](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9RNhr36KIW0&list=PLA5d0s1TS00r5h6ig3Fxp_FOMrNSpybWL&index=10)

Cardiorespiratory arrest /Death

# PREVENTION

- ❖ Everyone allergic to Latex must be identified as such
- ❖ With every exposure, the reaction can become more severe, avoidance is the key
- ❖ Patient environment should be labeled latex free to avoid personnel from bringing rubber/latex products into the room.
- ❖ The healthcare worker can transmit the allergen by hand to the patient so please practice good hand hygiene
- ❖ Encourage latex-sensitive patients to obtain and carry with them, at all times, some type of identification such as a medical alert bracelet and to have an epinephrine auto-injection kit if warranted.

- ❖ Use only available latex free supply . Most will state “ product does not contain natural rubber latex” or have this symbol on them.



- ❖ Patient's arm band should state Latex allergy.



As we have discussed, Latex allergies can be life threatening and must be managed as such.

If you have a patient experiencing an reaction, do not delay immediate emergency therapy. Inform the patient's provider and stop/abort treatment or procedure.

Assess and maintain the patient with appropriate documentation.

Hospital Policy: Latex Sensitivity/Allergy VAMC Memorandum 558.04-11C.18, April 2012

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