

Latex Allergy

Natural latex comes from rubber trees. Latex is used to make gloves, balloons, rubber bands, erasers, toys, condoms, bottle nipples and pacifiers.

Reactions to Latex

If you are allergic to latex, you'll get a reaction when you touch it.

Symptoms are:

- hives
- itching or flushing
- swelling
- sneezing
- runny nose
- cough
- wheezing
- trouble breathing
- chest tightness
- nausea
- dizziness or lightheadedness

Any mixture of these symptoms can be a sign of anaphylaxis, a life-threatening reaction that needs immediate medical attention.

Latex can also become airborne and cause breathing problems for a small number of patients.

If you have a latex allergy, you may also be allergic to certain foods including bananas, avocados, kiwi and chestnuts.

Treatment

- If your symptoms are mild, your doctor may tell you to take an antihistamine. Your doctor may also prescribe injectable epinephrine to keep with you in case you have a really bad reaction.
- Your doctor might tell you to get a Medic-alert bracelet that tells people about your allergy.
- You need to tell your family, employer, school staff and doctors about your allergy and where you keep your emergency medications.
- If you need surgery, ask that everything be latex-free.
- If you need to wear gloves, use vinyl or nitrile gloves.

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Author: Allergy | Approved by Patient Education Committee | Valid through 2023

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