

Latex Glove Allergies Explained

What **Causes** Latex Allergies?

Latex allergy is caused from latex proteins contained in natural rubber latex. A latex allergy can occur in two ways – either through direct contact from wearing a latex glove or through Inhalation from latex particles which you can breathe in. The amount of airborne latex in gloves differs greatly depending on the brand of glove used.

How **Prevalent** are Latex Allergies?

Only 2% of the population experience latex allergy symptoms. Those frequently exposed to latex seem to be at the greatest risk. People with other sensitivities such as food allergies are also more likely to react to latex. Newer gloves are much less likely to cause workers to develop allergies, as manufacturers are becoming more successful in leaching gloves which involves washing them after manufacture to reduce the amount of residual proteins.

What are the **Types or Symptoms** of Latex Allergies?

There are 3 key types of reaction that can occur as a result of glove use. These are as follows:

1) Immediate Type I Hypersensitivity

This type of allergic reaction is caused by the proteins found in natural rubber glove (Most commonly latex). If someone is allergic to natural rubber protein, the reaction will occur within 30 minutes of contact with the glove. It can show up as rhinitis with hay fever-like symptoms, conjunctivitis (pink eye), cramps, hives, and severe itching. It is rare, but symptoms may progress to include rapid heartbeat, tremors, chest pain, difficulty breathing, low blood pressure, anaphylactic shock, or potentially, death. People with this allergy cannot have contact with any type of natural rubber, such as rubber gloves, balloons, tyre, rubber shoes and boots. Nitrile or vinyl gloves which are both totally free from natural rubber are the best alternatives for people who suffer from this type of allergy.

2) Delayed Type IV Hypersensitivity

This type of allergic reaction is caused by rubber chemicals in the glove. Rashes may appear on the skin of the end-user sometimes up to 48 hours after contact with the glove. This results in the same type of reactions as irritant contact dermatitis (dryness, itching, burning, scaling, and lesions of the skin). Normally people who are allergic to these chemicals can only wear vinyl gloves as they do not contain the rubber chemicals. This is not a common allergy and affects very few people.

3) Irritation

This is the most common reaction that may happen to any end-user. It is the least threatening type of reaction, classified as a non-allergenic skin reaction. It usually occurs after repeated glove use and exposure to chemicals in the gloves resulting in dryness, itching, burning, scaling, and lesions of the skin. It can be intensified if a glove is not washed and cleaned properly after production leaving some additional residue on the surface of the glove. It is usually short term reaction and will disappear if the user takes a break from glove use.

How do you **Treat or Prevent** Latex Allergies?

The best treatment is avoidance – try using Nitrile, Synthetic or Vinyl Gloves. Alternatively try using a Powder-Free Glove may also reduce the risk.

Nitrile & Vinyl Non-Latex Allergies Explained

What **Causes** Non Latex Allergies?

Non-Latex Gloves can be sometimes made in same factory as Latex Gloves and therefore could be contaminated with latex proteins – if you are experiencing allergic reactions to gloves, check with your glove provider if this is the case.

Another possible cause could be chemicals called accelerators which are used in the production of gloves such as carbonates & thiurams which may cause reaction. To create vinyl, for example, petroleum is used in the manufacturing process. With Synthetic Gloves, the allergy issue often lies with the petroleum. While rare, petroleum allergies do occur in some individuals.

Another common issue is an irritative substance on the hands. Certain substances, such as residual hand soap or a scented lotion, will not cause too much of a problem on an exposed hand, but the associated reaction to it will be more pronounced in some individuals when they have a glove pressing the substance to their skin.

Glove Ventilation can also be another cause. Gloves are intended to prevent chemicals permeating into or out of the glove. Skin irritation can occur when a glove sweats and lacks breathability. Different gloves do have differing degrees of breathability, your glove provider may have an alternative that has a higher level of breathability.

Disposable Gloves have an intended wearing time, and chemical resistance level. Should the glove be worn for longer than intended, chemicals may actually leak through the glove itself causing a reaction on the skin to the chemicals?

How **Prevalent** are Non Latex Allergies?

Very small – virtually non-existent when compared to Latex – generally it is urticaria caused by perspiration and lack of breathability

What are the **Types or Symptoms** of Latex Allergies?

Symptoms are an itchy red rash, sometimes with small blisters. Often with Hives – raised red bumps that itch and cause swelling. Cracks can appear which can start to bleed or become infected.

How do you **Treat or Prevent** non Latex Allergies?

Try Powder Free Gloves. Increase the frequency with which you change gloves. Speak to your Glove provider to understand the chemical resistance of the Glove and to. Try a Glove with a higher level of breathability. This issue is also more evident when a glove is too small. Overall, too-tight gloves create irritation and discomfort as the skin is unable to breathe inside the glove. Accelerator-free gloves are available for use by people who are highly sensitive to these additives.

Visit Our Website: www.vetlabsupplies.co.uk