

Glove Allergies – Safety Advisory



Use of latex gloves has decreased in last several years due to the high incidence of latex allergies. This decrease in latex gloves use has caused an increase in the use of nitrile gloves as a suitable replacement.

An incident involving an allergic reaction to nitrile gloves was reported to Health, Safety & Wellness, who then investigated. It was found that the chemical accelerators and other additives commonly used in the production of nitrile gloves can cause an allergy. It often presents with itchy, irritated red skin on the wrists and the back of the hands.



The person suffering from this allergy noted that they suspected for a while that they may be reacting to nitrile gloves. They experienced symptoms but always assumed it was just due to sweat, irritation, or dry skin. The reaction was initially mild, and resolved quickly, so they thought nothing of it. Their most recent exposure was more severe and it became obvious that the symptoms were that of an allergy.

HSW feels it is important to communicate this incident to members of the campus community to ensure other people who may be suffering from mild symptoms do not ignore it, and that they seek a diagnosis and alternate gloves immediately, before the reactions become more severe.

Realize. **Safety** first.

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Preventative Measures

Unfortunately, simply switching back to latex gloves is not the answer. You may develop an additional allergy to latex upon repeated exposure, and the accelerator chemicals used in nitrile glove production are often commonly used in latex glove production.

Thankfully, glove manufacturers are aware of these allergies, and several “accelerator-free” nitrile gloves are available on the market.



If you suspect you have an allergy to any glove material, please contact HSW to report it, and we can assist you in finding a suitable glove that will not trigger allergic reactions.

It is important to consult with a doctor as well, to ensure follow-up allergy testing, or other diagnostics can be performed as they see fit.

Please communicate this information to all personnel using nitrile or latex gloves

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