



# Latex Allergy Policy



## **Introduction**

Benedictine University (the “University”) recognizes its responsibility for the health, welfare and safety of students and employees. The purpose of the Latex Policy is to reduce, so far as is reasonably possible, the exposure of students and employees to latex proteins on our campus. The University is committed to providing education on latex allergy awareness to students and employees.

Latex is a natural product, collected and concentrated from the bark of the rubber tree. The concentrated rubber latex is treated with additives in manufacturing latex gloves, balloons, etc. The products are soaked in water to remove proteins present in latex, but some proteins remain in the final product.

These proteins and additives can cause allergic reactions, including some severe. These reactions range from hives, runny nose and asthma to full intolerance such as serious lowering of blood pressure and potentially anaphylactic shock.

## **Purpose**

To educate students and employees of the potential range of reactions to latex exposure and to provide a work/classroom environment that minimizes the exposure to latex proteins.

## **Definitions**

Below are definitions of the types of allergic reactions people with latex sensitivity/allergy could encounter if exposed.

**Irritant Dermatitis** – recognized by dry, flaky skin with redness, swelling, papules, itching, eczema, cracks or sores.

**Allergic Contact Dermatitis** – usually takes 48-96 hours from the time of exposure for symptoms to develop. One may see dry, red, crusted and thickened skin with hard bumps, sores and sometime blisters.

**Systemic Reactions** – discomfort, itching, develop hives within five to 60 minutes after exposure. Airborne exposure from powders can result in red, itchy eyes, swollen eyelids, runny nose, shortness of breath, asthma, dizziness and rapid heartbeat.

**Anaphylactic Reactions** – rare, life-threatening, anaphylactic reactions have been reported after mucous membrane or inhalation exposure had taken place.

## **Persons with a greater risk for the development of latex sensitivity/allergy include:**

1. Frequent or prolonged medical or occupational exposure
2. History of asthma and environmental allergies
3. Food allergies especially but not limited to bananas, avocados, kiwi fruit, chestnuts, potatoes, tomatoes, peaches, grapes, cherry, pineapple and papaya.

## **University and Student/Employee Responsibilities**

### University Responsibility

1. Examine procedures used throughout the University and determine the appropriateness of glove usage. For each type of procedure, determine whether gloves are needed and what glove material is recommended.
2. Review and revise the policy on a regular basis to address new procedures or changes to existing procedures.
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4. Learn to recognize symptoms of latex allergy.
5. Where appropriate, non-latex gloves will be utilized.
6. Use/display of latex balloons will no longer be used.
7. Departments should identify existing items on campus that contain latex. As existing equipment is replaced, non-latex equipment should be purchased, if available.
8. If non-latex material is not available, skin contact precautions will be utilized with anyone who has a latex sensitivity/allergy.

### Student/Employee Responsibility

1. A student/employee must submit in writing suggested accommodations for consideration. Student requests for accommodations should be submitted to the Academic Accommodations and Accessibility at 630-829-6032 or [edavies@ben.edu](mailto:edavies@ben.edu). Employee requests for accommodations should be submitted to Human Resources or [humanresources@ben.edu](mailto:humanresources@ben.edu).
2. The student/employee will inform each faculty/instructor or supervisor of recommended accommodations at the initial contact and/or when there could be potential exposure to latex containing equipment.
3. The student/employee will take responsibility for knowing which articles/equipment in his/her work/classroom environment that may contain latex resulting in an adverse reaction.
4. The student/employee needs to let those around them how to recognize symptoms of latex allergies.

## **What products in the workplace and household environment contain latex?**

(Note: This list is not an exhaustive list.)

### **Emergency and first aid equipment**

- Blood pressure cuffs
- Stethoscopes
- Tourniquets
- Syringes
- Adhesive tape
- Ace bandages

### **Personal protective equipment**

- Gloves
- Goggles
- Respirators
- Rubber aprons

### **Office supplies**

- Rubber bands
- Erasers

### **Household products**

- Automobile tires

- Motorcycle tires
- Bicycle handgrips
- Carpeting
- Swimming goggles
- Racquet handles and golf grips
- Shoe soles
- Expandable fabric (waistbands)
- Dishwashing gloves
- Hot water bottles
- Pacifiers
- Baby bottle nipples
- Teething rings
- Balloons
- Rubber balls
- Belts
- Carpet backing
- Suspenders
- Foam pillows
- Garden hoses
- Weather stripping