American Latex Allergy Association

Anaphylaxis Fact Sheet

By Dr. Estelle Simons, MD *for Latex Allergy 101*

HOW TO RECOGNIZE ANAPHYLAXIS DUE TO NATURAL RUBBER LATEX:

1. Anaphylaxis is a serious allergic reaction that is rapid in onset and may cause death.
2. Anaphylaxis to latex can occur in community settings (for example, after exposure to latex in sports equipment, balloons, or condoms), as well as in healthcare settings.
3. Anaphylaxis symptoms can occur within minutes after exposure to latex.
4. Anaphylaxis symptoms usually involve more than one body area at the same time. There may be only a few symptoms, or there may be many symptoms. Watch for:
    - Skin symptoms: itching, hives, redness, swelling
    - Mouth symptoms: itching, swelling of lips and/or tongue
    - Throat symptoms: itching, tightness/closure, hoarse voice, difficulty breathing
    - Lung symptoms: cough, wheeze, difficulty breathing
    - Gut symptoms: vomiting, diarrhea, cramps
    - Heart symptoms: weak pulse, dizziness, passing out

HOW TO PREVENT ANAPHYLAXIS FROM NATURAL RUBBER LATEX:

1. Be able to identify the sources of latex in the community such as sports equipment, balloons, or condoms.
2. Be able to identify the foods that cross?react with latex; for example, bananas, kiwi, papaya, avocado, potato, tomato.
3. Strictly avoid exposure to latex and the foods that cross?react with it.

HOW TO TREAT ANAPHYLAXIS FROM NATURAL RUBBER LATEX:

1. Carry an epinephrine auto?injector such as an EpiPen or Twinject with you at all times, and know how to use it. Inject epinephrine promptly in the middle, outer side of the thigh. Epinephrine is the life?saving drug in anaphylaxis.
2. Call for help promptly (911, EMS, rescue squad).
3. Antihistamines such as Benadryl (diphenhydramine) and bronchodilators such as Ventolin (albuterol) cannot be substituted for epinephrine in the treatment of anaphylaxis because they do not prevent or relieve respiratory failure or shock.
4. Have a personalized anaphylaxis emergency action plan (download from **www.aaaai.org** [1]) and wear medical identification.

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Links:

[1] http://www.aaaai.org

[2] http://www.latexallergyresources.org/sites/default/files/attachments/Latex%20Allergy%20101%20Fact%20Sheet.Anaphylaxis.Simons_0.pdf