American Latex Allergy Association

Brandi's Story

I have worked in healthcare for 14 years. I developed contact dermatitis when I was still in school. My whole career I have requested latex free gloves. Two and a half years ago I was laid off from my job due to the bad economy. I was able to find fill in work while I looked for a more permanent job. Many of the small clinics that I worked at still had latex gloves. Although I requested latex free, occasionally they would run out and I thought it was safer to use the latex than not wear any gloves at all.

Then recently, I picked up balloons for my daughter?s birthday party. I had trouble breathing in the car. I rolled down the window and immediately took an antihistamine when I got home. Then we went to a neighbors birthday party about 6 months later. I started to feel itchy but I had no idea why, as there were only mylar balloons in the room. I went down to the car and went into anaphylaxis. My throat started to swell shut, I couldn?t breathe, and had trouble swallowing. Luckily, my doctor had given me an epipen after the first balloon incident. My husband gave me my epipen and then called 911 immediately. I went to the ER on got antihistamines, a breathing treatment and steroids. I later found out there were latex balloons in the other room. No, I did not even touch them!

Since then, I have had to take antihistamines every week and have had another trip to the ER. I have switched my job to a computer application coordinator, but it is still in healthcare. I am rarely around latex but it has gotten extremely dangerous.

I went to an allergist who took some blood and gave me a skin test. The skin test and blood test were not conclusive. Although, I did have trouble breathing and swallowing after the medium strength skin test. I He figured it was not a ?real? reaction because I did not develop hives at that time.

I am extremely frustrated and am searching for other avenues to explore. Please let me know if any of you have any ideas!

Brandi

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