American Latex Allergy Association

# Jenna's Story

When I was a baby, I was allergic to bandaids. I would get a rash after a day or so of having it on my skin. My parents weren?t worried about it since it?s common for babies. Over the years I?d get painful, itchy rashes from things but I couldn?t figure out what they were from. It bugged me but I ignored it.

When I was 15 we started wondering if I was allergic to latex, but it wasn?t confirmed until I was 16. I was in my chemistry class and I got a rash from the goggles they used all around my eyes. It made me famous around the science teachers because that hadn?t ever happened to a student before. Apparently it has very little latex.

Over the next couple of years, we?ve found that I?m abnormally sensitive to it. Anything will set it off. Even rubber bands and tiny little things. Sometimes I can?t even find the rash because it?s so small. A few months after the goggles incident I found out that I can also get sick by just being around it. Pink erasers are the worst, but I?ve gotten sick from being around shoes with rubber soles too.

If the offending item is not being used, it?ll take me about an hour to get sick from it. If I inhale the particles, I get dizzy, spacey, and nauseas. I?m wondering if it also lowers my blood pressure a bit too because I?ve nearly fainted the last two times. Rashes usually last a few hours if small, but if they?re bigger they can last a whole day.

I have to be ten feet away from latex things to not react to it. Some people don?t believe me on that, and they find out the hard way that I?m not kidding. I?ve found if you tell people firmly but nicely what happens and why to be careful with erasers and such around you; they usually get it and respect it. Only today did I have to start putting my shoes in the cabinet while I?m in my dorm room so I won?t get sick. I told my friends this and now they close their closet curtains in their own dorm rooms when I?m there.

Yes, this allergy is a pain to have, often literally. But it can be handled and you can do anything with it. I?m an artist, for example. Need an eraser? Just get gloves.

Jenna

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