American Latex Allergy Association

Judy's Story

I have known I had a latex sensitivity for many years. However, after two surgeries, it has now been diagnosed as Type I Latex Allergy. I am a teacher of young children. I was standing in a doorway during an assembly one day. I thought I smelled balloons, but looked around and did not see any. I suddenly began to feel sick to my stomach, dizzy, and disoriented. I left the auditorium through the doorway I had been standing in. I had been unknowingly standing in the doorway to a room where they had just brought in several hundred balloons for an after school event. I walked right through the balloons. Although all I remember is a long dark hallway. The room was actually brightly lit, and only about 20 feet long. To me it seemed very dark. I made it to a restroom where I became sick to my stomach. I then sat down in a small office. Luckily a friend saw the balloons. She knew I was allergic, so came looking for me. That was my first anaphylaxis reaction. Since then, I have had three severe reactions, but 8 minor as well, all needing medical attention and trips to the ER. I feel better reading some of these testimonials because I was feeling I was the only one. Many do not understand or realize the urgency of this condition. It amazes me to learn about all the items that contain latex, in both my classroom as well as home and elsewhere. My classroom is now pretty much latex free due to ordering latex free pencils (erasers are latex), latex free tape,(I have only found one brand and type), Latex free rubber-bands etc.
I recently had to leave a wedding shower when after being there for twenty minutes, they brought in bunches of balloons. I can?t go into many stores. I have a small list of restaurants that do not use latex gloves in food preparation. It has been difficult clearing my life of as much latex as possible. My allergist is wonderful. She keeps trying new things. She currently has me on two in-hailers, two daily antihistamines, and an asthma medication that I take daily, along with my epi-pens, Benedryl and another in-hailer that I carry for reactions. I am learning more every day on how to avoid exposure, as well as what items contain latex. Thank you for this wonderful site that is helping me deal with my latex allergy.

Judy

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American Latex Allergy Association
P.O. Box 198
Slinger, WI 53086
Phone: 262-677-9707 1-888-97-ALERT
Website: www.latexallergyresources.org

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