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Anaphylaxis During Scuba Diving?

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The American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology held its annual meeting in Boston, MA, November 12-17, 2004. The following abstracts were presented.

Anaphylaxis During Scuba Diving: A Hidden Source of Latex Hypersensitivity
Nsouli, et al.

Scuba diving is a commonly practiced activity which normally carries only minimal risks. Any severe allergic reaction such as anaphylaxis, however, occurring during this activity could be a particularly dangerous not only because the swimmer is submerged but also because of the lack of proximity to medical care. We report a case of anaphylaxis occurring during scuba diving resulting from an unsuspected hypersensitivity to a latex component of the scuba diving suit. A 21-yr-old white male developed a severe generalized urticarial rash with angioedema of his lips and eyelids, and difficulty breathing within 5 minutes of his applying the suit and entering the water. After being rescued, he was transported to a nearby emergency department where he received epinephrine, antihistamines, corticosteroids and IV fluids with gradual improvement over a 4-hour period. The patient denied being stung by a marine aquatic organism and there was no prior history of allergy or medications usage prior to his reaction. Since subsequent investigation revealed that the scuba diving suit contained latex (Brazilian rubber), a specific IgE RAST was found to be strongly positive (Class V) to latex. Therefore, the patient was advised to use a suit made of Neoprene synthetic rubber (polychloroprene) which is a non-latex containing product. This case report illustrates the importance of a diligent search for hidden sources of latex products which can produce life-threatening allergic reactions in sensitized patients.

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