

STANDARD OPERATING GUIDELINES

DELTA-CARDIFF
VOLUNTEER
FIRE COMPANY

S.O.G. E57-49 Revision: 0

SUBJECT: Latex Allergies

DIVISION: Ambulance

INITIAL DATE: 26 June 2003

EFFECTIVE DATE: 23 February 2004

PURPOSE: To provide guidelines to ensure safe care of the latex allergic patient and to prevent latex sensitivity/allergic reactions among pre-hospital providers.

APPLICABLE TO: All EMS, Fire and Fire Police Members

AUTHORITY: DCVFC Ambulance Committee

Background

1. Latex is a common component of many medical products and has been found to cause severe allergic reactions. An allergic reaction to latex can occur with any contact between a latex product and the skin. More severe reactions have been seen with parental or mucous membrane contact and with inhalation of latex particles. Symptoms can appear within 10 minutes but can take up to two hours to appear. Reactions may include hives, skin rashes, swelling, itching, runny eyes, nasal congestion, shortness of breath, wheezing, abdominal cramps, diarrhea, anaphylactic shock, and death.
2. Latex allergic individuals are those who have experienced systemic anaphylactic symptoms such as itching, swelling, hives, or difficulty breathing after exposure to various latex products or foods such as bananas, chestnuts, and avocados.
3. Latex sensitive individuals are those who have only experienced local skin reactions only and may be in a high risk group (see below) or sensitive to such foods described above.
4. Patients with high risk for developing a latex allergy include:
 - A. Patients with a history of spina bifida, bladder exstrophy, and congenital urological abnormalities.
 - B. Patients with a history of multiple allergies or allergies to nuts.
 - C. Patients with a history of allergic reactions after touching balloons, rubber gloves (or powder in them), or consumer latex products.
 - D. Patients who have an unexplained anaphylactic reaction during surgery, at the dentist,

or during urinary catheterization or other bladder/vaginal/rectal stimulation.

5. Common items that contain latex include: balloons, rubber bands, condoms, enema equipment, tourniquets, stethoscopes, blood pressure cuffs and tubing, pacifiers, blood tubes, ace wraps, syringes, drug vial stoppers, intravenous tubing ports, and sterile surgical gloves.

Guidelines

1. Non-latex gloves shall be standard stock. Every attempt shall be made to supply non-latex products and equipment.
2. All patients should be asked allergy status and that status reported to the next caregiver.
3. If the patient is latex allergic or sensitive, patient contact with any latex products shall be avoided during care. If a latex-containing product must be used (*i.e.*, blood pressure cuff), a barrier shall be used between the item and the patient's skin. A 0.22 micron filter should be used, if available, to administer intravenous medications (especially those drawn up through a latex stopper or run through a latex port).
4. If the patient develops a latex allergic reaction during transport, he/she shall be treated as per appropriate medical protocols. Any reactions shall be reported to the next caregiver and documented on the Patient Care Report.
5. If a crewmember is latex allergic or develops latex sensitivity, he/she shall notify an EMS officer, in order that all precautions may be taken to minimize exposure.
6. It is highly recommended that the crewmember have proper allergic identification and be treated by a physician for the latex allergy/sensitivity.

Approved: /s/ Anthony Hall

Title: Vice President