Section 9 Clinical Policies Subject 9.13 General Procedures **Policy 9.13.7 Latex Allergy/Sensitivity Management**	06/03/02 - Originated 01/07/11 - Reviewed w/ changes - Reviewed w/o changes Nursing - Author

Latex Allergy/Sensitivity Management

Definitions

Latex Allergy: Persons will be considered as having a latex allergy and will need latex precautions in the delivery of care if he or she has any of the following:

- A known latex allergic reaction during prior surgical or medical interventions.
- A history of allergy symptoms during non-medical latex contact (e.g., blowing up balloons).
- Spina bifida, including myelomeningocele and sacral or lumbosaccral angenis; congenital urological anomalies, such as cloaca or bladder extrophy.

Latex Risk: Persons of the following groups will be considered as high risk for latex sensitivity and will be closely evaluated to determine the need for latex precautions in the delivery of care if (s)he:

- Is or has been involved in the manufacturing of items containing natural rubber latex.
- Has a history of multiple allergies, especially to foods such as bananas, chestnuts, kiwis, avocados, and other tropical fruits.
- Has undergone early (i.e. childhood) or recurrent surgical or medical procedures.
- Wears latex gloves on a regular basis (e.g., healthcare workers, food preparations, etc.).
- Has a chronic illness.
- Has a history of asthma.
- Has a history of a spinal cord injury.

Latex-Safe Environment: Those areas which minimize exposure to materials containing latex across the continuum of care.

Policy

Latex-safe environments will be provided for latex allergic patients and employees.

Latex-free products will be readily available to health care workers. At a minimum, other individuals in the same work area will use powder free, low protein gloves (See Surgery Protocol for specifics in the OR). Latex-allergic workers will use only non-latex gloves.

Policy, continued

Any employee with symptoms indicating a possible latex allergy will be referred to Employee Health for assessment and/or further referral.

Offsite facilities are responsible for developing their own mechanisms to meet the guidelines of this policy.

Care of Patients with Latex Allergy

- Any patient suspected of having a latex allergy will be placed in a room in which latex products have been removed or covered if they could not be removed, to avoid direct contact of latex products with the patient.
- A latex-free environment, including equipment and supplies will be provided during any patient procedure or medication, IV, or blood product administration.
- Patients with latex allergies will be monitored for symptoms of allergic reactions.
- If a reaction occurs, 1) stop using the agent; 2) contact the physician and have the code cart readily available, and 3) observe for serious reactions such as bronchospasm or anaphylaxis
- Education will be provided to the patient and his/her family regarding latex allergy/precautions.
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Care of Employees with Latex Allergy

- Identification of known or suspected latex allergy in health care workers is accomplished at the time of hire or when an employee notifies Employee Health Center (EHC).
- Education of employees regarding latex allergy awareness will be covered at HR orientation.
  - New employees, as part of the hiring requirements, will visit the EHC and complete a Health Assessment. The Health Assessment will include questions addressing latex allergy. If a new employee is suspected of having an existing latex allergy they will be referred to their personal physician for treatment.
  - Employees will be counseled on items containing latex so (s)he can avoid them whenever possible.
  - The employee's department/ supervisor will be notified to arrange for use of latex free products.

Care of Employees with Latex Allergy, continued

- Current employees reporting to the EHC with a possible latex sensitivity will be provided an assessment. Diagnosis and treatment will be provided as medically indicated. Employees will be counseled on items containing latex so (s)he can avoid them whenever possible. The employee's department or supervisor will be notified to arrange for use of latex free products through Materials Management. Employees are responsible for assessing latex products used away from work.

- If the employee is unable to return to the same work area or a special product is being requested, a Request for Job Accommodations should be completed. Refer to the IHOP Policy 3.8.5, Job Accommodation.

Roles and Responsibilities

Physician Staff

The physician is responsible for documentation of a patient's allergic response and any confirming diagnostic test in the medical record.

Nursing Service

The nurse is responsible for assessment and documentation of patient allergies in the medical record. Documentation shall include:

- A note in the patient's admission assessment form/clinic note to document the type of allergic reaction to latex.
- Latex Allergy sticker placed on the front of patient's chart/permanent record.
- "Latex Allergy" written on the patient's allergy arm band and caution sheet upon admission
- "Latex Allergy" sign to be posted over the patient's door.

Materials Management

Responsible for providing "latex-free" supplies and will be a resource to staff/physicians regarding latex content

Note: Federal law mandates that products containing latex MUST have that information stated on the packaging of the product.

Pharmacy

Responsible for providing latex-free injectable supplies and IV solutions. (See pharmacy protocol).

Roles and Responsibilities (cont'd)

Surgery

Responsible for providing a latex-free surgical environment. (See Surgery protocol)

Laboratory Services

Responsible for obtaining blood and body fluid samples in a latex-safe manner. (See Laboratory Policy)

Dietary

Personnel will use non-latex gloves when preparing food.

Environmental Services

Will use latex free gloves.