

<b>Institutional Handbook of Operating Procedures</b> <b>Policy 09.13.07</b>	
Section: Clinical Policies	Responsible Vice President: EVP & CEO of Clinical Services
Subject: General Procedures	Responsible Entity: Nursing

**I. Title**

*Latex Allergy or Sensitivity Management*

**II. 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.

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

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.

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

**III. Procedures**

**A. Care of Patients with [Latex Allergy](#)**

1. 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.
2. A latex-free environment, including equipment and supplies will be provided during any patient procedure or medication, IV, or blood product administration.
3. Patients with latex allergies will be monitored for symptoms of allergic reactions.
4. If a reaction occurs,

- a) Stop using the agent;
  - b) Contact the physician and have the code cart readily available, and
  - c) Observe for serious reactions such as bronchospasm or anaphylaxis
5. Education will be provided to the patient and his/her family regarding latex allergy/precautions.
  6. Observe for serious reactions such as bronchospasm or anaphylaxis
  7. Education will be provided to the patient and his/her family regarding latex allergy/precautions.

**B. Care of Employees with Latex Allergy**

1. 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).
2. Education of employees regarding latex allergy awareness will be covered at HR orientation.
3. New employees, as part of the hiring requirements, will 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.
4. Employees will be counseled on items containing latex so (s)he can avoid them whenever possible.
5. The employee's department/ supervisor will be notified to arrange for use of latex free products.
6. Current employees reporting 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.
7. If the employee is unable to return to their usual and customary job or a special product is being requested, a Request for Job Accommodations should be completed. Refer to the IHOP Policy [3.2.2 Americans with Disabilities Act Policy](#).

**C. Roles and Responsibilities**

1. Physician Staff: The physician is responsible for documentation of a patient's allergic response and any confirming diagnostic test in the medical record.
2. Nursing Service
  - a) Prior to physician evaluation, the nurse may document new patient allergies in the medical record.
  - b) Once treatment decisions have been made (i.e. orders written), the nurse will no longer document new allergies in the medical record, but will notify the treating provider of the

previously undocumented allergy. Such notification will be documented in the medical record.

- c) An allergy arm band will be placed on the patient upon admission
  - d) Latex Allergy sticker placed on the front of patient's chart/permanent record.
  - e) "Latex Allergy" sign to be posted over the patient's door.
3. 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.

- 4. Pharmacy  
Responsible for providing latex-free injectable supplies and IV solutions (See pharmacy protocol).
- 5. Surgery  
Responsible for providing a latex-free surgical environment (See Surgery protocol).
- 6. Laboratory Services  
Responsible for obtaining blood and body fluid samples in a latex-safe manner (See Laboratory Policy).
- 7. Dietary  
Personnel will use non-latex gloves when preparing food.
- 8. Environmental Services  
Will use latex free gloves.

**IV. Dates Approved or Amended**

<i>Originated: 06/03/02</i>	
<i>Reviewed with Substantive Changes</i>	<i>Reviewed without Substantive Changes</i>
01/07/2011	04/20/2018
03/19/2015	

**V. Contact Information**

Nursing Services  
(409) 772-4104