

Gable Health and Counseling Center

LATEX ALLERGY POLICY/PROTOCOL

I. **Purpose:**

Any student who is at risk for having a latex allergic reaction should notify the Gable Health and Counseling Center. The goal is to eliminate student exposure to latex allergy-causing proteins (antigens). Albright College strives to maintain a healthy and safe environment for its students, employees and visitors.

II. **General Information:**

A. **Latex Allergy** refers to a student with a known or suspected allergy to latex who will require latex precautions at all times. The following students will be considered as having a **latex allergy**:

1. Any student with a known latex allergic reaction during prior surgical or medical interventions.
2. Any student with a history of allergy symptoms during non-medical latex contact (i.e. blowing up balloons).
3. Any patient with spina bifida, including myelomeningocele and sacral or lumbosacral agenesis; congenital urological anomalies such as cloaca or bladder extrophy.

B. **Latex Risk** refers to a student who may be at high risk for developing a latex allergy. The following students 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:

1. A person involved in the manufacturer of items containing natural rubber latex.
2. Any person with a history of multiple allergies, especially to foods such as bananas, chestnuts, kiwi, avocados, other tropical fruits.
3. A student who has undergone multiple surgical procedures, especially during the first year of life
4. Any student with a history of asthma.
5. Any chronically ill student
6. Any student who wears latex gloves on a regular basis (i.e. healthcare worker, food preparation, etc.).
7. A student with a history of a spinal cord injury.

III. **Specific Information:**

A. **Identification**

1. All patients will be asked about any allergy during a patient visit in the health center. Any student needing latex precautions will have a latex allergy indicator on the front of the patients chart which is located in the Gable Health and Counseling Center

B. Reaction Prevention

1. The Gable Health and Counseling Center will be sensitive to the needs of patients allergic to latex and will strive to achieve a latex free environment.
2. Monitoring the patient for any sign/symptom of an allergic or anaphylactic reaction that may include any of the following: **Itchy Eyes, Tachycardia, Hypotension, Generalized Pruritis, Flushing, Facial Edema, Urticaria, Shortness of Breath, Feeling Faint, Nausea and Vomiting, Abdominal Cramping, Diarrhea, Wheezing**

Note: Signs and Symptoms of an allergic reaction can occur minutes to hours later after the exposure to latex

C. Reaction Management:

1. Call Public Safety ext 7670 to dispatch EMS. Patient will be transported to the hospital via EMS.

D. Patient Education:

1. Patient will verbalize understanding of the following topics:
 - a. Level of latex sensitization: Latex Risk or Latex Allergy.
 - b. Need to disclose the risk/allergy information with each healthcare encounter.
 - c. Signs and symptoms of allergic reaction and appropriate management.
 - d. Patient information sheet will be given to patient including: risk of certain foods to latex allergic reactions, information on how to obtain a medical alert bracelet, identification and use of non-latex products at home and in community settings.

Of Special Note to the Albright College Community: Due to the sensitive nature of the Latex Allergy and potential risk of exposure to members of our community who may experience a severe reaction, we will no longer permit the use of latex balloons on the Albright College Campus.

References:

NIOSH (The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health) [1997]. Alert Preventing Allergic Reactions to Natural Rubber Latex in the Workplace. DHHS 97 ̢ 135 (1-16).

Burt, Sharon (1998). What you need to know about Latex. Nursing 98,28(10), 33-39.

Young, M. (1998). Latex-Safe Enviroment. Surgical Services Management,4(3), 19-24.

O'Boyle, E., & Brochard, B. (1998). Latex Allergy: BE PREPARED. Surgical Services Management, 4(3), 32-38.

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