



# Rx Update

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May 2006

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## LATEX ALLERGY PRECAUTIONS – CHANGE IN POLICY

Latex (natural rubber) has been shown to cause immediate hypersensitivity reactions, including systemic anaphylaxis, and delayed hypersensitivity reactions. Latex precautions that eliminate latex gloves, Foley catheters, and other latex-containing medical supplies reduce and may eliminate the risk for latex allergy reactions in susceptible individuals. There are minimal data suggesting that latex allergic reactions occur because of the use of latex-containing medication containers (syringes or vials). Some medications are not available in latex-free packaging, and precautions taken to avoid exposure to latex may increase microbial risk, delay therapy, and compromise patient care. The decision to use latex precautions should be made with a careful assessment of the risk/benefit relationship in regard to medication. Procedures have been established to provide guidance to staff in dispensing medications to patients who are identified as having a known or suspected allergy to latex, or who are at a high risk of developing a latex allergy.

### Latex Minimizing Precautions (One-Stick Method)

**Latex minimized** is when a medication has been prepared in a manner to avoid exposure to latex; however, the product is not latex free because it has come into contact with latex during preparation, manufacture, or storage. Products prepared in this manner will contain the auxiliary label “Latex Minimized.”

Beginning in June, the one-stick method will be used for all patients who do **not** have a documented IgE-mediated hypersensitivity reaction or anaphylaxis to latex, but who are following latex precautions (e.g., delayed hypersensitivity reactions - contact dermatitis) or high-risk groups (e.g., spina bifida patients). These patients will be noted as Latex Minimizing Precautions by Pharmacy in IPR. **Latex-containing vial stoppers may be punctured once (“one-stick” method) with a 20-gauge or smaller needle to remove the medication from a new, unopened vial.** For medications that require reconstitution, the stopper of the vial may be punctured once to both reconstitute the medication and once to remove the solution from the vial. **For intramuscular (IM) or subcutaneous injections, the needle should be changed prior to injecting the medication into the patient. Latex-containing vial stoppers are not removed for patients following Latex Minimizing Precautions.** For non-latex containing vial stoppers, the medication can be prepared per usual routine.

### High-Risk Latex Precautions

In a patient with a documented IgE-mediated hypersensitivity reaction or anaphylaxis (immediate allergic reaction manifested by respiratory difficulties, angioedema, bronchospasm, cutaneous erythema and pruritus, lightheadedness or syncope, severe GI cramping, etc.) to latex, additional procedures to limit exposure to latex will continue to be utilized. Products prepared using these procedures will be labeled “High-Risk Latex Precautions.” **Latex-containing vial stoppers will be removed to limit exposure to latex. Note: Latex-containing vial stoppers will only be removed if the patient has a documented IgE-mediated hypersensitivity reaction or anaphylaxis to latex. If not, the “one-stick method” will be utilized.** These patients will be noted as High-Risk Latex Precautions by Pharmacy in IPR. The prepared product is not latex free, for the drug solution has been in contact with the latex-containing vial stopper since its manufacture and the solution may contain latex. For non-latex containing vial stoppers, the medication can be prepared per usual routine.

Patients with a documented IgE mediated hypersensitivity or anaphylaxis should be monitored/observed after medication administration, particularly injectable medication administration. Nursing staff should have an Emergency Drug Tray (which contains epinephrine and diphenhydramine) readily available for use in the event of an acute hypersensitivity reaction.

Please call the Pharmacy servicing your area or the Drug Information Center (6-2600) to determine if a medication vial contains latex or with any questions on preparing medication for patients following latex precautions.