

GLOUCESTERSHIRE PARTNERSHIP NHS TRUST

This document supports the Trust Health and Safety Policy as it applies to

LATEX

Details of the arrangements for implementation are set out in the Health and Safety Policy.

All reasonable steps will be taken by the Trust to ensure that all exposure of employees to substances hazardous to health is prevented or at least controlled as far as is reasonable practicable under the requirements of section 2 of the **Health & Safety at Work Act 1974** (HSW Act). Under the **Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations 1994** (COSHH), employers are required to make arrangements to control the exposure of their employees to all substances which may affect their health.

In recent years there has been an increase in the number of cases of latex sensitisation in health care settings. This is possibly due to an increase in wearing latex gloves as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as part of universal infection control procedures. Devices causing most risk are powdered gloves with high allergen contents, however many articles used in the health care, and domestic, settings contain latex.

In order to minimise the occurrence of sensitisation and the effect of latex allergy, the Trust will make staff and patients aware of the issue and take appropriate measures to reduce risk by eliminating or reducing the exposure to latex allergens in all products as far as is reasonably practicable.

Responsibilities

The Chief Executive has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy.

General Managers and Executive Directors are responsible for implementation within their units.

The Medical Director will be responsible for ensuring all Medical Staff and Clinical Heads of Service are aware of the problem and the need to include questioning about previous reactions to latex or rubber products in patients' histories.

Medical Staff and Clinical Heads of Service will be responsible for including information on previous reactions to latex or rubber products in patients' histories, to identify patients who may be at risk. This information will be recorded in accordance with the Trust Record Keeping Policy.

Occupational Health will be responsible for:

- screening all new employees for sensitivities to latex at the pre-employment assessment.
- investigating all reported cases of reaction to latex in staff
- advising on how their condition can be managed in the work environment.
- providing managers and control book holders with information to enable them to recognise the signs and symptoms of latex sensitivity.
- informing the Trust Health and Safety Adviser of cases of diagnosed latex allergy using an IR1 form

Procurement will:

- monitor all products that potentially contain latex through liaison with manufacturers
- advise staff ordering such products of the potential risks
- identify and recommend any suitable alternatives

Managers are responsible for:

- Providing staff with information on the signs and symptoms of latex allergy
- Referring symptomatic staff to Occupational Health
- Keeping information regarding latex in the Health and Safety Control Book
- Assessing all possible sources of latex exposure
- Trying to minimise sources of latex exposure for sensitised staff and patients who work or require treatment in their units respectively.
- Ensuring that alternatives to latex are made available where possible
- Providing staff with comprehensible information and instruction on the nature and likelihood of their exposure to latex
- Providing staff with comprehensible information and instruction on health effects from latex exposure

Staff are responsible for:

- co-operating with safe working practices and notifying managers of any health problems that may be associated with latex

Procedure To Minimise Exposure

Disposable gloves should be worn to protect the wearer from contamination by body fluids, (unsterile) and to protect the patient from cross infection where body defence mechanisms are by-passed (sterile). They are also used to protect both staff and patients from two way cross infection during exposure prone invasive procedures.

Glove Selection

Procurement carry a range of vinyl gloves. These gloves will be used whenever possible. If latex gloves must be used, the stock items are **Safeskin** or **Microtouch**, low extractable protein, powder free, sterile and unsterile. Any exceptions to these must be with the approval of the Trust Procurement Officer. There is an agreement in place with Procurement that all orders for latex gloves are vetted to ensure they meet the above standard.

Medical Staff and Clinical Heads of Service Responsibilities for Patients with Latex Allergy

Patients who are considered high-risk, suspect or symptomatic, should be identified. This can be achieved through the use of a screening questionnaire. Groups that have been identified as being at risk include:

- healthcare workers
- Spina Bifida patients
- Patients who have had multiple surgery
- Atopic individuals

Sensitised Staff/Patients

Where an individual is identified with a possible health effect related to the use of latex gloves or other latex produces the Unit Manager will;

- a) ensure staff are referred to the OHD
- b) ensure patients are reported to the Medical Director,
- c) Report the sensitivity using an IR1/2 (incident report form) to the Health & Safety Adviser
- d) review the controls in place
- e) correct any deficiencies in the controls
- f) inform the individual affected, and/or his/her representative where appropriate of the actions being taken, and the results of any investigation
- g) offer sensitised staff support through changes to work practices and make every effort to offer redeployment as far as reasonably practicable and in accordance with Trust policies.

For staff diagnosed as sensitised to latex, the Trust will pay the cost of a Medic Alert or equivalent identification badge.

Safe System of Work

- Latex gloves should only be worn when necessary
- Use powder free gloves
- Only use gloves purchased through Procurement
- Report any problems associated with glove use to management
- Managers to report any suspected reaction to latex products in staff to Occupational Health and the Health & Safety Adviser.

Summary

Healthcare working methods involve the use of substances which may pose a risk to the people exposed to them. Where hazards are known specific steps can be taken. The most important steps are:


- identify the hazard
- assess the risk
- eliminate, prevent or control the risk
- maintain and monitor the controls
- monitor the health of the workforce
- ensure the controls are maintained
- inform and train the workforce

Review


This document will be subject to review every 12 months, or if circumstances indicate it may no longer be valid.

The document will be amended in the light of review.


Date: April 2003

Activity	Glove Type	Brand Name	Size	Stock Code	Unit	July 1999 price per unit
First Choice for All General Medical And Infection Control Procedures	Non-sterile Vinyl	Premier	Small	FTE130	50 single	1 -19 £1.18 > 19 £1.00
			Medium	FTE228		
	Large	FTE229				
	 Sterile Copolymer Non stock - order through NHS Supplies.	Gloves	Small	FTE120	100 single	1-9 £3.35 >9 £3.07
			Medium	FTE121		
Large			FTE122			
Dispos-a-Glove Non stock - order through NHS Supplies.	Small	JJ-MDG601	100 single	£9.26		
	Medium	JJ-MDG701				
	Large	JJ-MDG801				
	Small	JJ-MDG651	50 pairs	£9.26		
	Medium	JJ-MDG751				
	Large	JJ-MDG851				
The Only Exceptions to Vinyl 1. Specialised Dental And Podiatry Procedures Requiring High Manual Dexterity.	Non Sterile Powder Free Latex Must not to be used: • by staff with latex allergy • in the care of patients with latex allergy	Safeskin Microtouch	X Small Small Medium Large X Large Small Med Large	FTE088 FTE898 FTE899 FTE900 FTE089 FTE796 FTE800 FTE801	100 single 100 pairs	1-9 £4.40 >9 £4.02 1-9 £4.59 >9 £4.21
2. Invasive And Surgical Procedures Requiring High Manual Dexterity.	Sterile Powder Free Latex Must not to be used: • by staff with latex allergy • in the care of patients with latex allergy	Biogel • Surgeons • Dental • Microsurgery • Diagnostic Gloves Ultra Sterile	5.5, 6,6.5, 7,7.5, 8,8.5 Small Medium Large	see stores catalogue for codes FTG047 FTG048 FTG049	50 pairs 25 pairs 50 pairs 25 pairs 50 pairs	£63.95 £20.96 £67.33 £20.96 1-7 £11.72 >7 £10.70

For Staff and Patients with Known Type I Allergic Reactions

Activity	Glove Type	Brand Name	Size	Stock Code	Unit	July 1999 price per unit
First Choice for All General Medical And Infection Control Procedures	Non-sterile Vinyl  Sterile Copolymer Non stock - order through NHS Supplies.	Premier	Small	FTE130	50 single	1 -19 £1.18 > 19 £1.00
			Medium	FTE228		
		Gloves	Small	FTG082	100 single	1-9 £3.35 >9 £3.07
			Medium	FTG082		
Dispos-a-Glove Non stock - order through NHS Supplies.	Small	JJ-MDG601	100 single	£9.26		
	Medium	JJ-MDG701				
	Large	JJ-MDG801	50 pairs	£9.26		
	Small	JJ-MDG651				
Medium	JJ-MDG751					
Large	JJ-MDG851					
All Invasive and Surgical Procedures and Vaginal Examinations	Sterile Non-Latex For Staff and Patients with Known Type I Allergic Reactions	Dermaprene Dermashield	5.5,	FTG062	25 pairs	1-3 £65.00 >3 £63.23
			6,	FTG063		
			6.5,	FTG064		
			7,	FTG065		
			7.5,	FTG066		
			8,	FTG067		
			8.5	FTG068		
Rectal Examinations	Non Sterile Non-Latex, powder free (Nitrile) For Staff and Patients with Known Type I Allergic Reactions	Nitratouch	Small	FTE876	100 single	1-9 £10.05 >9 £9.16
			Medium	FTE877		
			Large	FTE878		
		X Large	FTE879	100 single	1-9 £10.05 >9 £8.23	
		Small	FTG078			
		Medium	FTG079			
Large	FTG080					

Dressing Aid Packs

Activity	Glove Type	Brand Name	Size	Stock Code	Unit	July 1999 price per unit
Changing Dressings	Non Sterile Vinyl 	Shermond Protector	Small Medium Large	FTE782 FTE783 FTE784	100	1-9 £2.43
	Sterile Plastic	Hampshire	S M L	FTE723 FTE725 FTE727	50	1-9 £11.01
	Sterile Latex Powder Free Must not to be used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by staff with latex allergy • in the care of patients with latex allergy 	Premier Polyfield	S M L	FTE724 FTE726 FTE728	50	1-3 £16.70