Latex Sensitivity

Purpose: As health care providers, we are acutely aware of the fact that many individuals are latex sensitive, and being exposed to these products can result in severe sensitivity reactions. Every effort should be made to maintain a reduced latex environment for identified patients.

1. **Definitions**
   - **A.** Irritant reactions are not considered allergenic. They are caused by mechanical or thermal injury. Symptoms include redness, cracking, peeling, chapping, fissures, thickened skin which ends at point of contact.
   - B. Type 1 reaction is an IgE antibody mediated system reaction caused by absorption, inhalation or mucosal contact. Symptoms include redness, swelling, wheezing, asthma, hives, rhinitis, conjunctivitis and anaphylaxis. Onset of symptoms is 5-30 minutes following exposure.
   - C. Type IV reaction is a T cell mediated reaction caused by accelerators, antioxidants and disinfectants used in the latex manufacturing process. Symptoms include pruritis, edema, eczema, skin cracking and redness. Onset is often delayed 6 to 48 hours after exposure and usually resolves in 72-96 hours.
   - D. Latex free describes products in which latex is not able to come into contact with the skin, mucous membrane or blood stream, nor can latex be released into the air.
   - E. Reduced latex environment is one in which the risk of latex exposure is as low as reasonably possible. This includes routinely eliminating powdered gloves from the patient environment.
2. **Latex Sensitivity High Risk Factors**
   Individuals at risk for latex allergy generally are those with a history of:
   - A. Identified hypersensitivity reaction to latex products such as sneezing, itching eyes, hives, wheezing or anaphylaxis.
   - B. Eczema from latex gloves.
   - C. Spina bifida or any urogenital abnormality requiring frequent use of latex catheters.
   - D. Multiple surgical procedures in infancy.
   - E. Employment in the manufacture of rubber products.
   - F. Allergies to bananas, chestnuts, kiwi, or avocados.
   - G. Atopic dermatitis.

3. **Policy**
   Reasonable efforts will be made to identify prehospital patients who may be allergic to latex products. Following identification of these patients, efforts will be made to maintain a latex reduced environment.

4. <u>Procedures</u>

A. Complete the Latex Sensitivity Assessment Form (Attachment C). The form attached should be used as a template for the type of information which should be collected for patients identified as latex sensitive.
B. If the patient is allergic to latex, document same in the patient care report.
C. If the patient admits to other allergies or symptoms which suggest "high risk", notify medical control of the patient(s) status.
D. Maintain a reduced latex environment during patient transport.
E. Products containing latex that have the potential to come into contact with the patient's skin, or more importantly their mucous membranes, should be avoided. Latex free gloves and medical products should be used. Cover latex containing medical devices with stockingette or Saran Wrap.
F. Remove rubber stoppers from medicine vials prior to drawing medications. **Do not pierce the rubber stopper**.
G. Refrain from removing gloves in the presence of the patient.
H. If the patient exhibits signs and symptoms of allergic reaction, refer to the appropriate treatment protocol.

LATEX SENSITIVITY ASSESSMENT FORM

Directions: Please ask the patient(s) to answer the following questions to the best of their ability.

Have you ever suffered from:	**No**	**Yes**	**If yes, explain:**
Allergic nasal inflammation			
Allergic eye inflammation			
Asthma			
Bronchitis			
Eczema or skin inflammation			
Hay fever			
Hives			
Sinus problems			
Unexplained rash			
Reactions to band-aids/tape			
Have you ever reacted after handling:	**No**	**Yes**	**If yes, explain:**
Poinsetta plant			
Balloons			
Rubber products			
Clothing with elastic or stretchy fabrics			
Elastic bandages			
Have you ever had any of the following symptoms following a dental appointment:	**No**	**Yes**	**If yes, explain:**
Itching			
Tearing			
Fatigue			
Sneezing			
Runny nose			
Facial swelling/redness			
Have you ever reacted after eating:	**No**	**Yes**	**If yes, explain:**
Avocados			
Bananas			
Tropical fruit, kiwi, papayas			
Chestnuts			

Patient's signature_____ Date _____

EMS Provider signature _____ Date _____