

AV0600 – LATEX SENSITIVITY PREVENTION PROGRAM

Interior Health would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Dākelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka’pamux, Secwépemc, St’át’imc, Syilx, and T̓silhqot’in Nations, where we live, learn, collaborate and work together.

Interior Health recognizes that diversity in the workplace shapes values, attitudes, expectations, perception of self and others and in turn impacts behaviors in the workplace. The dimensions of a diverse workplace includes the protected characteristics under the human rights code of: race, color, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical disability, mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, criminal or summary conviction unrelated to employment.

1.0 PURPOSE

To promote worker health and wellness by reducing the risk of exposure to Latex Products in the workplace.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
<i>Latex</i>	<i>Natural rubber Latex is a product made from the tacky, milky sap that is produced by the commercial rubber tree and used for its elasticity and barrier properties.</i>
<i>Latex Allergy</i>	<i>A hypersensitivity to Latex that causes either:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Allergic contact dermatitis due to direct contact with the chemical additives in natural rubber Latex or synthetic rubber, or</i> • <i>An immune response (e.g., anaphylaxis) due to exposure to the proteins in natural rubber Latex</i>
<i>Latex Products</i>	<i>Latex-containing or natural rubber-containing medical devices, personal protective equipment, and household items. Latex Products can include gloves, bandages, condoms, balloons, rubber bands, airway tubing, intravenous tubing, catheters and stethoscopes.</i>
<i>Latex Sensitivity</i>	<i>A reaction to Latex that may result in a Latex Allergy with repeated exposures. It typically presents as irritant contact dermatitis.</i>
<i>Worker</i>	<i>All IH workers (contract and non-contract), physicians, volunteers, students, and/or contractors.</i>

3.0 POLICY

3.1 Interior Health (IH) is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all workers and will continue to eliminate Latex Products from the workplace wherever feasible.

Policy Sponsor: Vice President, Human Resources and Professional Practice	1 of 3
Policy Steward: Corporate Director, Workplace Health and Safety	
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4.0 PROCEDURES

4.1 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- 4.1.1. Senior Administration (Senior Executive Team, Executive Directors, Directors)
 - Adhere to budget plans that strive for a Latex-free environment.
 - Champion IH's commitment to a Latex-free environment.
 - Ensure that all managers/supervisors support and implement the program in their areas of responsibility.

- 4.1.2. Managers/Supervisors
 - Ensure Workers are familiar with Latex Sensitivity and Latex Allergy.
 - Ensure Workers are familiar with the resources provided in Section 5.0, Related Policies and Tools.
 - Provide Latex-free products to Workers diagnosed with a Latex Sensitivity or Latex Allergy.
 - Support Latex Sensitivity and Latex Allergy related accommodations received from Workers.
 - Submit a [PHSA Product Investigation Form](#) when products in the workplace are identified as containing Latex.
 - Comply with policies listed in Section 5.0, Related Policies and Tools.
 - Ensure Workers are utilizing the Skin Care Self-Assessment Tool found in the [Hand Care Toolkit for Staff Working in Healthcare](#) when there are skin integrity concerns related to glove use.

- 4.1.3. Workers
 - Be aware of the Latex Sensitivity Prevention Program.
 - Inform supervisor of any Latex Sensitivity or Latex Allergy concerns.
 - Inform supervisor of any latex containing products identified in the workplace.
 - Review and comply with Section 5.0, Related Policies and Tools.
 - Maintain [Routine Practices](#) while adhering to this program.
 - Complete *Skin Care Self-Assessment Tool* found in the [Hand Care Toolkit for Staff Working in Healthcare](#) when there are skin integrity concerns related to glove use.

- 4.1.4. Workplace Health & Safety
 - Maintain this program and supporting resources by reviewing every three years or as necessary.
 - Provide site support related to Latex Sensitivity and Latex Allergy issues on an as-needed basis.

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- Provide consultation to Employee Health and Wellness when there are cases that require alternatives and options beyond what is available in the tools and resources provided.
- 4.1.5 Employee Health & Wellness
- Support managers and IH employees with workplace accommodations and medical restrictions when Latex Allergy or Latex Sensitivity is reported.
 - Document and maintain employee records in WHITE.
 - Support managers and IH employees by providing existing accommodation alternatives and options as per existing resources that help with finding alternative products.
 - Consult internal resources within Workplace Health & Safety for additional support with cases that require alternatives and options beyond what is available in the tools and resources provided.
- 4.1.6 Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committees and Worker Health & Safety Representatives
- Review incident reports and investigations relating to Latex Sensitivity, Latex Allergy and Latex Products.
 - Recommend program improvements to management.
 - Support IH's ongoing pursuit of using suitable Latex-free products.
- 4.1.7 Purchasing and Supply Chain
- Maintain ongoing research into procurement of Latex-free products that are less hazardous and equally suitable.

5.0 RELATED POLICIES AND TOOLS

- [AV0100 – Occupational Health & Safety Program](#)
- [AV1100 – Employee Incident Reporting and Investigation](#)
- [IF0100: Routine Practices for All Care Areas](#)
- [AQ0300. Authority and Responsibility of Purchasing](#)
- [Hand Care Toolkit for Staff Working in Healthcare](#)
- [Prevention and Remediation Guidelines - Skin Integrity Concerns related to Personal Protective Equipment](#)
- [PHSA – Product Investigation Centre \(Portal\)](#)
- [Selection Guide – Exam and Surgical Gloves](#)

6.0 REFERENCES

- OHS Guidelines, General Requirement G8.2(3). [Responsibility to provide](#)
- WorkSafeBC (2021). [Dealing with Latex Allergies at Work](#)

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