

Policy on Latex Allergy

Introduction

The University of Illinois College of Medicine strives to provide a safe and trusting learning environment for its students. The education of medical students concerning exposure to infectious and environmental hazards and methods of prevention is required and carefully monitored. If a latex allergy is suspected, the student's health care provider should perform a complete evaluation. Those determined to be allergic to latex should wear a medical-alert bracelet and carry an "Epinephrine Kit" (Epi Pen).

The Learning Environment

Health care facilities must develop policies and procedures for caring for the latex-sensitive patient and health care worker. All major clinical training sites should have a policy in place for addressing latex allergies. Medical students should become familiar with that policy and immediately report any problems he/she may have at a major clinical training site related to the handling of his/her latex allergy. Worker compensation laws mandate that hospitals provide a safe working environment for their employees. The Americans with Disabilities Act requires that employers make reasonable accommodation for latex-sensitive employees. The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) requires adjustments in the workplace to accommodate latex-sensitive workers. Recommendations for latex-safe facilities include providing latex alternative products and supplies, including latex-safe injections and IV solutions. Surgery staff members should provide a latex-safe surgical environment and ancillary departments should provide a latex-safe treatment area when required.

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