

Latex Gloves

Latex gloves are an effective barrier in preventing the transmission of many infectious diseases. However, some individuals develop latex allergies upon exposure to certain proteins in latex rubber with single or recurrent usage. Individuals sensitized to the latex protein can exhibit skin redness, itching, rash, or hives. Symptoms can occur within minutes to hours of exposure, depending on the level of sensitivity. More severe reactions include runny nose, sneezing, itchy eyes, scratchy throat, asthma (coughing, difficult breathing, and wheezing), and on rare occasions, shock. Individuals with an elevated risk of developing a latex allergy include those who have:

- Allergies, asthma, or eczema
- Food allergies to bananas, avocados, kiwis, or chestnuts
- Defects in their bone marrow cells
- Undergone multiple operations

Due to the increasing incidence of natural rubber latex allergies, Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) recommends using only non-latex gloves in research and teaching laboratories. If latex gloves are required for work with a specific chemical/infectious material and indicated in the safety data sheet (SDS), contact EHS prior to procurement to see if a suitable alternative is available. If the Principal Investigator/Lab Manager and EHS determine latex gloves to be the safest option, individuals must comply with the following practices:

- Use latex gloves only when handling the specific chemical/infectious material that requires them
- Use only powder-free latex gloves with reduced protein content
- Avoid using oil-based hand creams or lotions (which can cause glove deterioration), unless specifically proven to maintain personal protection and glove integrity
- Frequently clean work areas where latex gloves have been used
- Contact [EHS](#) if any symptoms of a latex allergy are observed