

**Self-adherent wrap
bandages—a hidden
source of natural
rubber latex**

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Case Report

A 33-year-old nurse presented with a
history of acute itching and swelling
of her hands, eyelids, lips, and cheek,

minutes after handling Coban® bandages. The bandage wrapper had been removed for ease of use and stored in an unlabelled box.

She had previously experienced irritation of her hands and lips when using powdered latex gloves and blowing up balloons, and therefore suspected that she had an allergy to latex. She had however not been formally tested, but avoided latex and had had no further problems.

Investigations confirmed a type 1 allergy to natural rubber latex, with radioallergosorbent test grade 2 to latex and total IgE 98.1. Patch tests to the British Contact Dermatitis Society standard series and natural rubber series were negative.

Type 1 natural rubber latex allergy within the hospital setting is usually associated with the use of natural rubber latex gloves. Other sources of

latex include sphygmomanometers, injections bungs, and balloons.

Coban® bandages are commonly used in accident and emergency departments for splinting over finger dressings and in dermatology clinics as occlusion over impregnated bandages for patients with atopic eczema. Health care professionals and atopic eczema patients are both groups at risk of developing natural rubber latex allergy (1).

Individual Coban® bandage packaging is appropriately labelled with warning the latex content. The latex provides the tackifying agent allowing the bandages to be self-adhesive. We would recommend that these and similar bandages remain stored in the outer packaging, to warn of their contents for those patients and staff at risk with known natural rubber latex allergy. We would also like to

highlight the possible latex content of self-adhesive bandages with respect to consideration during risk assessments for natural rubber latex allergic health care workers.

Reference

1. Guillet G, Guillet M H, Dagregorio G. Allergic contact dermatitis from natural rubber latex in atopic dermatitis and the risk of type 1 allergy. *Contact Dermatitis* 2005; 53: 46–51.

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