

Avoid Medications with Formaldehyde in Patients with Contact Allergies



To the editor:

We read with interest the manuscript, “Avoiding Formaldehyde Allergic Reactions in Children” in the January 2007 issue. Formaldehyde can cause a significant allergic contact dermatitis in sensitized children.¹

Aspartame is being used increasingly in chewable tablets and sugar-free formulations. We would like to add that many common medications for children contain aspartame, which is converted into formaldehyde within the body. These medications include: Singulair (Merck, montelukast sodium 4-mg or 5-mg chewable tablets; however, the oral granules do not contain aspartame); Augmentin (GlaxoSmithKline, amoxicillin/clavulanate potassium oral suspension); and amoxicillin chewable tablets.² In addition, it is also present in diet soft drinks, which have gained popularity among children with the rising obesity/type 2 diabetes epidemic.

It is important to note that these medications should be avoided in patients with contact allergies to formaldehyde. Aspartame has also been linked to isolated hypersensitivity reactions including cutaneous nodules resembling erythema nodosum and headaches, and neuropsychiatric disorders including panic attacks, mood changes, visual hallucinations, manic episodes, and isolated dizziness.³

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REFERENCES

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2. *Physicians' Desk Reference.* Montvale, NJ; Thomson Healthcare: 2007.
3. American Academy of Pediatrics Committee on Drugs. “Inactive” ingredients in pharmaceutical products: update (subject review). *Pediatrics.* 1997;99(2):268-278.

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