

rub tests agree with other studies concerning vegetable contact urticaria (7). Delayed contact allergy caused by asparagus (1) and IgE-mediated inhalant allergies to this member of the Liliaceae family (8) have been described. However, to the best of our knowledge, these are the 1st reports of immunologic contact urticaria caused by asparagus.

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Lauryl gallate hand dermatitis in a cheese counter assistant

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Case Report

A 23-year-old woman had an extremely painful itchy hand dermatitis, characterized by dermatitis sicca of the finger tips and, on the backs of the hands and fingers, crusts, fissures and exudation. This had started to appear 2 months before presentation and had been unsuccessfully treated with topical corticosteroids. She was a cashier in a large supermarket, but she sometimes helped out as a replacement elsewhere, and for the last 3 months she had been working as a cheese counter assistant. Patch tests with the GIRDCA standard series, supplemented with a food preservatives series, showed a strong positive reaction to lauryl gallate (0.1% pet.), an antioxidant sometimes added to cheese, butter and margarine. She completely recovered by not working for a while and through brief therapy with clobetasol propionate ointment. Relapses were not observed when she resumed her job as a cashier at the supermarket, rather than returning to the cheese counter.

Discussion

Phenolic compounds, such as propyl gallate, octyl gallate and dodecyl gallate (lauryl gallate), are often employed as antioxidants to prevent rancidity and bad smell in pharmaceutical and industrial products such as dairy and bakery goods, frying oils, cosmetic creams, lotions and lipsticks (1). Gallates are considered safe at

the allowed concentrations of 100 mg/kg in oils and fats and 0.05–0.2% in foods and topical products (2, 3). Despite their wide use, there are few reports of their identification as contact sensitizers (4–7). They are moderate to strong sensitizers and sensitization to one may cause cross-reactivity to others.

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