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**Alternatives for Health Care Workers
With Latex Glove Allergies**

To the Editor.—Berky et al¹ are to be congratulated for bringing the increasing problem of latex allergies among health care workers to the attention of the medical community by their recent survey of US Army dental personnel. I would like, however, to correct a common misperception that their article inadvertently perpetuates.

Based on a 1986 text by Taylor and Fisher,² they state that "synthetic Elastyren gloves may be the only glove that some exquisitely rubber-sensitive medical personnel can use." In 1986, this statement would have been accurate; today, however, it is not.

In 1990, a nonlatex, nonvinyl, thermoplastic elastomer called Tactylon received its 510(k) notification from the Food and Drug Administration for use in both sterile surgical and non-sterile examination gloves. Tactylon contains neither latex allergens nor the chemicals added during vulcanization.³ Furthermore, Tactylon is hypoallergenic as measured by the modified Draize test of 200 individuals required by the Food and Drug Administration. Patients with contact urticaria to rubber gloves have also tested negative to Tactylon gloves in prick and use tests.⁴

As a distributor of gloves (including vinyl, latex, and Tactylon), I believe that diagnosis-driven management of latex glove allergies will only be possible if the medical community is aware of all available treatment strategies. If the barrier properties of vinyl concern latex-sensitive health care workers, Tactylon gloves should be considered as an alternative choice.

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1. Berky ST, Luciano WJ, James WD. Latex glove allergy: a survey of the US Army Dental Corps. *JAMA*. 1992;268:2695-2697.

2. Taylor JS, Fisher A. *Contact Dermatitis*. 3rd ed. Philadelphia, Pa: Lea & Febiger; 1986:604-630.

3. Heese A, Hintzenstern JV, Peters KP, Koch HO, Hornstein OP. Allergic and irritant reactions to rubber gloves in medical health services: spectrum, diagnostic approach, and therapy. *J Am Acad Dermatol*. 1991;25:831-839.

4. Lahti A, Turjanmaa K. Prick and use tests with 6 glove brands in patients with immediate allergy to rubber proteins. *Contact Dermatitis*. 1992;26:259-262.