

MOLLOY COLLEGE
THE BARBARA H. HAGAN SCHOOL OF NURSING
Latex Allergy Policy

Background: Over the last ten years, latex allergy has become a serious healthcare problem. Experts have described it as a disabling occupational disease among healthcare workers (American Nurses Association, 1997).

The allergic reaction to latex is evoked by direct contact with products containing latex rubber or by inhaling powder from latex gloves. Responses may range in severity from a rash to asthma attacks to death from anaphylaxis (New York State Nurses Association, 1999).

The increased need to don gloves in both medical and non-medical settings has increased the prevalence of latex allergies. A 1997 alert published by the National Institute of Occupational Safety (NIOSH) indicated that about 1% to 6% of the general population and 8% to 12% of regularly exposed healthcare workers are sensitized to latex. These statistics indicate that an increasing number of entering nursing students may already have a latex sensitivity. Beginning one's professional life with a latex allergy presents unique problems for students and faculty.

In light of this growing problem the Division of Nursing has developed the following policy related to latex exposure.

Initial Steps: All Molloy Division of Nursing Student and Faculty History and Physical Forms to have a category, which indicates *Latex Allergy*. The healthcare provider completing the form must specifically respond to this item.

Follow-Up: In those instances where a latex allergy has been indicated, faculty/student will need to be contacted by Health Services: The following actions should be initiated:

- Faculty/Student will be given literature on latex allergies
- Faculty/Student will be counseled regarding acceleration of sensitivity with repeated exposures
- Faculty/Student will be encouraged to wear a Medi-Alert bracelet as suggested by NIOSH
- Faculty/Student acknowledgement of this policy will be kept on file in department

Agency Contact: The faculty/student will be responsible for sharing information about themselves regarding latex allergy with the respective clinical agency.

I am a faculty member/student in the Molloy College Division of Nursing. I have read the Molloy College policy concerning Latex Allergy.

I do not have any allergy to latex, or

I have a latex allergy and I have previously so notified Molloy College. I am fully aware of the dangers arising out of exposure to latex and I agree to exercise appropriate caution. I hereby release Molloy College, its Board of Trustees, officers and administrators and employees from any claim or liability arising out of my exposure to latex either on the campus of Molloy College or in any clinical setting.

Print Name

Signature

Date