

Choosing the right glove, safely

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Tips for proper glove usage

Do:

- Wash your hands every time you don and doff gloves
- Use gloves properly
- Inspect gloves for tears and pinholes
- Change gloves frequently
- Understand task-specific glove usage procedures, especially when handling chemotherapeutic drugs
- Keep fingernails trimmed and remove jewellery

Don't:

- Store gloves in areas with extreme temperatures
- Store gloves near heaters, air conditioners, sterilizers, or Xray units
- Wash and reuse disposable gloves
- Use hydrocarbon-based products (hand moisturizer) when wearing gloves

hen was the last

time you reviewed your glove use at work? The glove management program is a specific type of workplace exposure control measure and can be used to accommodate individuals with latex sensitivities.

Similar to other control measures, a glove management program includes policies and procedures for the selection of the most suitable glove material for a given task and for the prevention of latex allergy.

These include:

- Clearly defined workplace policy regarding usage of glove materials;
- Needs assessment of the appropriate glove protection for specific tasks and procedures; Risk assessment of tasks on the likelihood of exposure;
- Involving end users and other representatives in the glove selection process;
- Creating a glove inventory database detailing purchasing and usage information for individual sites and facilities;
- Providing informed training and education to employees on relevant policy, safe work procedures, and

potential health risks associated with latex gloves;

- Identifying working groups and sites with high potential for latex exposure for further prevention strategies;
- Checking with manufacturers for the protein content of gloves and having them updated for newer products;
- Training and encouraging employees to recognize and report symptoms of latex allergy.

A key element of the glove selection process is the need for a multi-disciplinary work team, including representatives of frontline employees, hospital administration, facility maintenance, central supply, and occupational health.

The choice should be based on a risk assessment that accounts for the risk and likelihood of potential exposures, type of workplace setting, working environment and condition, the length of glove usage, the amount of stress on the glove, etc.

Finally, users should trial-test the selected gloves to ensure personal comfort and the ability to safely perform the task(s) required.

As always, training and education must be made available to support proper use, inspection, and disposal of the gloves, as well as any limitations regarding glove protection and potential health effects ... as directed by Health Canada in 1997.

Equally as important are the opportunities for feedback from frontline users during education, and training sessions serving to maximize the effectiveness of the glove management program through shared experiences.



Courtesy of the Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare in BC. Check their website at www.ohsah.bc.ca

Concerned about glove choices or latex exposures at your workplace? Contact your occupational health & safety steward, or call HSAs OH&S officer at 1.800/663.2017. Courtesy of the Occupational Health and Safety Agency for Healthcare in BC. Check their website at www.ohsah.bc.ca

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