



Potassium Dichromate (Chromium)

Your patch tests indicate you have a contact allergy to potassium dichromate. This means that you should avoid skin contact with all products containing chromium, or chromate in the future.

Chromium may be found in:

- **Tanned leather** in shoes, gloves, jackets, belts, watch straps, leather steering wheel covers and furniture. Approximately 90% of leathers are chromate-tanned but leathers that are vegetable-tanned will be fine to wear.
- **Cement.** European legislation has limited the amount of chromate present in cement, but it can still cause a problem
- **Cosmetics** including some eyeshadows and mascaras (unlikely to be labelled as containing chromium)
- **Chromium plated metals** (may be called chrome) including mobile phones, screws, fittings, construction materials, sheet metal and musical instrument strings
- **Joint replacement prostheses** e.g. for hip and knee; remember to inform your surgeon

Other less common sources of exposure to chromium include:

- Tattoos -may be in some green pigments
- Chromic suture material (catgut, rarely used)
- Household products, bleaches and detergents
- Primer paints and wood preservatives
- Textiles especially in military green colours
- Welding and electroplating
- Boiler linings and foundry sand
- Glass polishes, glass stains and glazing materials
- Matches
- Magnetic tapes
- Printing inks and photocopying inks
- Pottery glazes and lacquers

Avoidance of chromium

If you take steps to avoid chromium it is likely that your skin will improve. However in some cases the dermatitis can remain. The reason why this occurs is uncertain, but it is more likely if your dermatitis is severe and chronic.

Leather

If you have foot dermatitis you will need to avoid chromate-leather shoes and find vegetable-tanned leather shoes instead. It may be difficult to know whether leather has been chromate- or vegetable-tanned but there are some manufacturers who do specify that their products are vegetable-tanned. Further details can be found after a quick internet search. Plastic or fabric shoes may be alternatives. Vegan shoe manufacturers are a useful resource.