



Rubber accelerators

Your patch tests show you have a contact allergy to one or more of thiuram mix, carba mix, mercapto mix or mercaptobenzothiazole. This means that you should avoid contact with all products containing these chemicals in the future.

These chemicals are also known as rubber accelerators and are added to rubber during processing. They may be found in natural rubber latex and synthetic rubber products such as nitrile. Labelling is poor or non-existent so it is rarely possible to know whether a particular rubber product contains the chemical to which you are allergic.

Rubber accelerators may be found in some of the following type of products:

- **Gloves** including those used for medical and dental examinations, household, gardening and protective heavy duty gloves.
- **Footwear** including shoes (soles and insoles), rubber boots and flip-flops
- **Clothing** including elasticated clothing, masks, swimming goggles, diving suits, watch straps
- **Personal care products** such as eyelash curlers, make up sponges, condoms
- **Medical items** including compression bandages, support bandages, walking stick handles, some compression hosiery
- **Household items** such as hot water bottles, rubber bands, earphones, TV remotes, carpet underlay, balloons, air mattresses mobile phone cases
- **Equipment including** grips on lawnmowers, motorcycles, bikes, vacuum cleaners, polishers and wheelchairs, escalator hand rails
- **Sports equipment** including grips and equipment, squash balls
- **Work place** including tyres and rubber hosing

Gloves

Most latex and nitrile gloves should be avoided. Vinyl (PVC) or plastic gloves will be fine to use however these may provide inadequate protection for some types of work. If you need to wear rubber gloves for work you will need to liaise with your occupational health department to obtain 'accelerator-free gloves' for you. DermaPrene gloves are accelerator-free.

Shoe wear

The best shoe to wear is all leather, plastic or wooden. Rubber insoles should be removed and replaced by insoles made of piano felt, cork or plastic. Old shoes tend to cause more problems than new, as sweating leaches accelerators out of shoe rubber. Contaminated old socks should be discarded.

Medical bandaging

Some elasticated tubular bandages (e.g. Tubigrip) and some compression bandages (e.g. Actico) contain rubber and should be avoided. Compression stockings made from Elastane, Lycra or Nylon are usually free from rubber but it is important to check with the supplier.