



Cobalt

What are the aims of this patient information leaflet?

This leaflet has been written to help you understand more about your contact allergy. It tells you what a contact allergy is, what causes this allergy and what you can do about it.

What is contact allergy?

Dermatitis, also known as eczema, describes a type of inflammation of the skin. Contact dermatitis or contact eczema is a term used when this inflammation is caused by direct or indirect skin contact with something in your environment. Allergic contact dermatitis occurs when your immune system causes allergy to a very specific chemical or substance that has been in contact with the skin.

What causes your specific allergy?

Your [patch tests](#) indicate that you have a contact allergy to **cobalt**.

What is cobalt?

Cobalt is a metal but it can be used in non-metallic products.

What are some products that contain cobalt?

Jewellery (usually cheap or costume jewellery) such as necklaces, earrings, wristwatches, bracelets, piercings and hair clips. 22-carat gold and platinum are unlikely to cause problems

Metal parts in clothing such as jean studs, zips, belt buckles and fasteners, handbag and purse clasps, metal toe caps. Use accessories made of plastic, or metal covered with plastic

Dental products including orthodontic braces and retainers

Other personal products such as mobile phones, laptops, tablets, electric razors, spectacle frames and cigarette lighters

Home environment. There are many items in everyday use including handles on drawers and cupboards, keys, coins, kitchen utensils, scissors, cutlery, toasters, knitting needles and sewing equipment, hooks, screws, strong magnets, prams, pushchairs and wheelchairs

Office equipment: paperclips, staplers, scissors and pens

Hair dye and metal hairdressing tools

Some blue pigments in crayons, leathers, pottery glazes, paints and some blue tattoos. In cosmetics, the pigment may be declared under the colour index (CI) number. Numbers to avoid include: CI 77332, CI 77346, CI 77343, CI 77348, CI 77003, CI 77792, CI 77192

Cosmetics: eye shadows, mascaras, blushers, compact powders, some nail stickers and nail tips, and metal beauty tools

Cements: May be found in some cements

Industrial including electroplating, welding, sheet metals, circuit boards, machine lathes and saws. Cobalt naphthalate and cobalt oleate are used as drying agents in printing inks, putty, varnishes and paints. Found in wet clay and used in glass manufacture

Agriculture such as chemical fertilisers and animal feed additive

Joint prostheses and metal fixing plates and screws. Many people with cobalt allergy have no problems with a prosthesis containing cobalt. Speak to your orthopaedic surgeon about your allergy if surgery is planned

Other medical devices such as medication pumps, intravascular stents, valves and pacemakers, including those which may be implanted. Speak to your clinician about your allergy if procedures are planned

Vitamin B12 tablets/supplements (including over-the-counter) and injections – if you are taking these, please discuss this with your doctor

(<https://shorturl.at/iZPjQ>)

Remember, always check the label, these lists can never be complete and ingredients change.

How can I manage my allergy?

This means that you should avoid putting products containing cobalt onto your skin in the future.

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Contact with the skin for more than a few minutes would be needed for your eczema or dermatitis to reoccur so it is very unlikely that you will need to avoid all the items on the above list. Concentrate on avoidance of objects with prolonged skin contact.

Self-care (what can I do?)

Always check the ingredient listing on the product, package or package insert as these lists can never be complete and ingredients change. This is particularly important for any products purchased outside the EU where some allergens may not be banned.

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