



Colophonium/Abitol

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 **colophonium**.

What is colophonium?

Colophonium is obtained from the sap of pine trees and is frequently used to make things sticky such as glues and adhesives. It is also called colophony or rosin.

What are some products that contain colophonium?

Cosmetics including mascara, lipstick, eye shadow and concealer, nail varnish
Toiletries including clear soaps, hair-removing wax, dental floss, chewing gum, sanitary towels and nappies
Sports items including athletic and gymnastic grips, ski wax, sports racket handles, golf club grips
Medicines/ dressings Wart removers, medicated creams, ointments, dressings eg Granuflex and Duoderm Thin, adhesive plasters
Rosin for violin bows
Paper and paper products, glossy magazines
Polishes and waxes, pine oil cleaners
Pine trees and pine sawdust
Shoes (used as glue)
Glue tackifiers, labels, stamps.

At work, colophonium may be called by other names including abietic acid, abietic alcohol, abietyl alcohol, abitol, methyl abietate alcohol, gum rosin, tall oil and wood rosin. It may be found in:

Soldering products and cutting fluids
Printing inks
Dental cements and impression paste
Grease and lubricant thickener
Machine belts and clutches
Surface coatings and sealants and synthetic rubber
Varnishes and glazes, paints, sealers, corrosion inhibitors
Waterproofing agent.

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 colophonium onto your skin in the future.

Ask your workplace to obtain the materials and safety data sheets (COSHH sheets) for products you use.

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.

Created: 2016

© 2026