



Ethylenediaminetetraacetic Acid (EDTA)

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 **Ethylenediaminetetraacetic Acid (EDTA)**.

What is Ethylenediaminetetraacetic Acid (EDTA)?

EDTA is widely used to improve the stability and shelf life of many personal care and household products and medicaments. It helps prevent ingredients from breaking down, changing colour or becoming less effective over time. EDTA is also a chelating agent, meaning it binds metal ions and in healthcare, is used in some blood collection tubes to prevent blood clotting before laboratory testing.

What are some products that contain Ethylenediaminetetraacetic Acid (EDTA)?

EDTA can be found in:

Cosmetics and personal care products including:

- Moisturisers and Serums
- Foundation and make up
- Shampoos and Conditioners
- Soaps and Cleansers
- Sunscreens

Medicines and Eye drops

Household cleaning products

Pesticides

Industrial products

Blood collection tubes and laboratory testing materials

Food (e.g. packaged, pickled and tinned foods, spreads, sauces, alcoholic drinks) and nutritional supplements

Always check ingredient listings on products, packaging and package inserts. If symptoms continue despite avoidance, seek advice from your dermatology team.

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 Ethylenediaminetetraacetic Acid (EDTA) onto your skin in the future.

Carefully check ingredient labels for ethylenediaminetetraacetate (EDTA), inform healthcare professionals of your allergy, and avoid products containing EDTA whenever practical. Remember that formulations can change over time. Look for the full label of Ethylenediaminetetraacetate. It may appear as EDTA, Disodium EDTA, Trisodium EDTA, Tetrasodium EDTA, Sodium EDTA or Edetate Disodium.

It can be present as calcium sodium EDTA as the E number E385 in foods. Eating foods containing EDTA is very unlikely to cause any significant skin or health problems once eaten or drunk but contamination around the lips/ skin around the mouth may cause a rash/eczema and occasionally may cause symptoms in the mouth.

An allergy to EDTA does not prevent you from having routine blood tests. EDTA may be relevant only in laboratory or occupational settings where it is handled directly.

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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