



# COVID-19 Primary Care Vaccination Site Brighton Racecourse

## Latex Policy

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## 1. Background

This policy outlines the Brighton Racecourse GP Vaccination Centre's duties under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974, to protect employees from exposure to health hazards whilst at work and to ensure non-employees/patients are not exposed to health risks while on NHS premises. In line with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations (COSHH) the Trust is required to undertake a risk assessment of any hazardous substances.

Natural rubber latex is fluid containing protein, from the *Hevea brasiliensis* tree, used in the production of rubber with the addition of other chemicals (e.g. accelerators). It is commonly used in NHS hospitals. Most surgical gloves are made from latex. It is used in the production of a wide range of other medical devices and is considered to be hazardous due to its irritant properties.

A latex allergy is a reaction to one or more of the components of latex rubber products. There are three recognised types of reaction:

a) Irritation - Non-allergic condition b) Type IV - Delayed hypersensitivity caused by residual accelerators in latex rubber. Localised with no risk of systemic reaction c) Type I - Immediate hypersensitivity caused by the natural protein residue in latex rubber. May be localised, but has the potential to become systemic at any time.

Repetitive skin or mucus membrane contact with any rubber latex product containing high protein residues may cause sensitisation. Sensitivity may also be transmitted via the powder used to dust some latex gloves through direct contact or inhalation. Staff predisposed to allergies in general – Asthma, Hayfever or Atopic Dermatitis are more likely to become Latex sensitised. Staff who are allergic to certain foods e.g.: avocado, chestnut and banana are also more susceptible.

Health care professionals working at the vaccine centre are a high risk group as they are required to wear gloves daily. Latex sensitivity is not restricted to health care staff. Patients who come into contact with these products can also suffer adverse reactions. This can result in dermatitis, generalised skin irritation and swelling or where mucus membranes are involved nasal congestion, red eyes/irritation or breathlessness. Extreme cases may result in anaphylactic shock within minutes of exposure.

## 2. Guidance

Latex products are not required for any procedures undertaken at the Racecourse. Therefore, Brighton Racecourse GP Vaccination Centre will operate a strictly **NO LATEX** policy for clinical supplies.

- No products containing natural rubber latex will be used on site.
- No products containing natural rubber latex will be procured for use on site.
- Staff receiving stock will check that products delivered do not contain latex.
- If products containing natural rubber latex are delivered to the site (e.g. gloves from central supplies), these will be quarantined away from circulating stock, labelled clearly as "Latex products. Do not open/use" and will be returned to supplier at the earliest convenience.

Rubber bands are currently used to secure vaccination cards and may present risk to staff or patients and/or contaminate clinical supplies.

- No rubber bands to be taken into pods.
- Cards to be supplied to admin staff without rubber bands. Rubber bands to be disposed of in domestic waste on receipt of stock.
- All staff including marshalls to be asked if they have a latex allergy. To be referred for risk assessment if this is the case.

### 3. References

- Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations
- Health and Safety (First Aid) Regulations Workplace (Health, Safety and Welfare) Regulations Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations, 2002
- Avoidance and Management of Latex. (Royal College of Nursing, 1996) Latex Sensitisation in the Healthcare Setting (Use of Latex Gloves).
- Device Bulletin 9601, Medical Devices Agency (1996)
- Latex Medical Gloves (Surgeons' and Examination) Powdered Latex Medical Gloves (Surgeons' and Examination). Safety Notice SN 9825, Medical Devices Agency 1998.
- [www.hse.co.uk](http://www.hse.co.uk)