

21 Formaldehyde – Patient Information

Your T.R.U.E. TEST results indicate that you have a contact allergy to formaldehyde. This contact allergy may cause your skin to react when it is exposed to this substance, although it may take several days for the symptoms to appear. Typical symptoms include redness, swelling, itching and fluid-filled blisters.

Formaldehyde is used as a preservative and disinfectant in many industrial and household products. It is also used to finish durable press fabrics. Formaldehyde-releasing agents can be a common source of formaldehyde at home and at work.

Where is formaldehyde found?



At work, you may find formaldehyde and formaldehyde-releasing agents in:

- Urea-formaldehyde foam insulation and resins
- Finish treatments on some textiles and fabrics
- Embalming and preserving fluids
- Pressed wood such as particleboard, medium density fiberboard (MDF), plywood, oriented strandboard (OSB)
- Photographic developer chemicals
- Industrial metal working fluids and coolants
- Glues, inks, toners and paints
- Cleaning agents, waxes and polishes



At home, you may find formaldehyde and formaldehyde-releasing agents in:

- Cosmetics such as foundations and powders, blush, mascaras, eye shadows, eyeliners and pencils
- Durable press (wrinkle-resistant) fabrics
- Cleaning products, waxes, and polishes and paints
- Tobacco and cigarette smoke
- Skin care products such as creams, lotions and moisturizers
- Personal hygiene items such as soaps, cleansers, and shampoos
- Smoke from wood, coal, kerosene or charcoal fires

How can you avoid formaldehyde?

- Wash new clothing and bedding several times in hot water before use. Avoid permanent press and wrinkle-resistant clothing.
- Only use products that do not list formaldehyde or formaldehyde-releasing agents on the label, ingredients list or Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). If there is no information, contact the product manufacturer or visit their website.
- Tell your physician, pharmacist, dentist, veterinarian, beautician and hairdresser that you are allergic to formaldehyde. Ask for preparations that do not contain formaldehyde or formaldehyde-releasing agents.
- Wear protective gloves. Heavy-duty chemically resistant gloves made of natural or synthetic rubber may be good for working with formaldehyde. Use fabric or leather gloves to protect your hands from wood products that may contain formaldehyde.
- If you think that you contact formaldehyde at work, ask your employer for MSDS or manufacturer information on the product(s). Talk to your employer about using a different product or wearing protective gloves and clothing.

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What should you look for and avoid?*

Avoid products that list any of the following names in the ingredients, MSDS or package insert.

- **Formaldehyde** or formalin; formic aldehyde; methaldehyde; methyl aldehyde; methylene oxide; N-methylol; oxymethylene

You may also react to formaldehyde-releasing preservatives such as:

- **Bronopol**, also known as 2-bromo-2-nitropropane-1,3-diol
- **Diazolidinyl urea**, also known as N,N'-bis(hydroxymethyl) urea and 1-(1,3-Bis(hydroxymethyl)-2,5-dioxoimidazolidin-4-yl)-1,3-bis(hydroxymethyl)urea
- **DMDM Hydantoin**, also known as 1,3-cimethylol-5,5-dimethylhydantoin, and 1,3-Bis(hydroxymethyl)-5,5-dimethylimidazolidine-2,4-dione
- **Imidazolidinyl urea**, also known as imidurea, and N,N"-methylenebis(N'-(3-(hydroxymethyl)-2,5-dioxo-4-imidazolidinyl)urea
- **Tris nitro**, also known as trimethylolnitromethane, nitroisobutylglycerol, and 2-nitro-2-(hydroxymethyl)-1,3-propanediol, tris(hydroxymethyl)nitromethane
- **Quaternium 15**, also known as chloroallyl methenamine chloride, N-(3-Chloroallyl)hexaminium chloride and hexamethylenetetramine chloroallyl chloride.

What are some products that may contain formaldehyde or formaldehyde-releasing agents?*

- Dove® Deep Moisture Body Wash
- L'Oreal® Lash Out Mascara
- Zeasorb® Super Absorbent Foot Powder
- Baby Magic® Gentle Baby Bath
- Revlon® Professional Cuticle Remover
- Hagen Flea & Tick Shampoo for Cats
- Phisoderm® Deep Cleaning Cleanser
- Blush By Cover Girl®
- Pond's® Dry Skin Cream
- Huggies® Natural Care Baby Wipes
- Cover Girl® Simply Powder Foundation
- Hagen Tearless Shampoo for Dogs

What products do NOT contain formaldehyde or formaldehyde-releasing agents?*

- Suave® Moisturizing Body Wash
- Neutrogena® Weightless Volume Mascara
- Dr. Scholl's® Shoe Shot Deodorant Powder
- Johnson's® Baby Softwash Body Wash
- Neu® Glycolic Cuticle Peel
- Aveeno® Baby Wash
- Lubrex® Gentle Hand Cleanser
- Almay® Nearly Naked Blush
- Lubrex® Hand Cream
- Tushies™ Baby Wipes with Aloe vera
- Almay® Luxury Finish Powder

*For additional information about products that might contain formaldehyde or a related substance, go to the Household Product Database online (<http://householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov>) at the United States National Library of Medicine. These lists are brief and provide just a few examples. They are not comprehensive. Product formulations also change frequently. Read product labels carefully and talk to your doctor if you have questions. These are general guidelines. Talk to your doctor for more specific instructions.