

Patient Information

Formaldehyde

Your TRUE TEST[®] indicates that you have a contact allergy to formaldehyde.

Formaldehyde in contact with your skin may result in dermatitis. Brief or occasional contact may not pose a problem.

Formaldehyde occurs naturally, in many manufacturing processes and in finished products and materials in home and work environments. Pure formaldehyde is a gas at room temperature and it is commercially available as a water solution.

Where is formaldehyde found?

The most prevalent routes of formaldehyde exposure are fabric finishes in clothing and linens and from formaldehyde-releasing preservatives in skin-care products.

Formaldehyde and formaldehyde-releasing agents may be found in small amounts in many cosmetics, including make-up, nail polish and nail hardener as well as creams, shampoos, mouthwashes, deodorants, skin cleansers and medicated creams. Other sources of exposure include, household cleansers, disinfectants, high-quality paper, cigarette smoke, automobile exhaust and smoke from wood, coal or charcoal fires. Some rubber and plastic products may contain formaldehyde.

High concentrations of formaldehyde may be found in sanitary fluid, embalming fluid, paints, varnishes, water resistant glues, disinfectants, anti-mould agents, pesticides and in the manufacture of rock wool and hard board.

Formaldehyde may also be found in building materials, such as fiberboard, plywood and insulation, and in cutting fluids, as well as in photographic chemicals, coolants, and some fertilizers and pesticides.

How to avoid formaldehyde

Small amounts of formaldehyde are difficult to avoid.

In general, wash new clothing and bedding several times in hot water before use. Avoid permanent press and wrinkle-resistant clothing. 100% cotton, polyester, nylon, and acrylic fabrics generally contain less formaldehyde than blended fabrics do.

Because formaldehyde is found in cosmetics, creams, and shampoos, it is important to use only ingredient-labeled products that do not list formaldehyde or formaldehyde-releasing preservatives on the label.

If you suspect that you are being exposed to this allergen at work, consult your employer regarding Material Safety Data Sheets.

Inform your healthcare providers that you are allergic to formaldehyde.

What to look for

Synonyms for formaldehyde

- Formaldehyde (INCI Name)
- CH₂O
- Formalin
- Formic aldehyde
- Formol
- HCHO
- Methanal
- Methyl aldehyde
- Methylene oxide
- Oxomethane
- Oxymethylene,
- Paraform

Formaldehyde-releasing preservatives to which you may react

- Bronopol™ (2-bromo-2-nitropropane-1,3-diol)
- Germall II® (diazolidinyl urea)
- Germall® 115 (imidazolidinyl urea)
- Glydant® (DMDM hydantoin)
- Quaternium-15
- Tris Nitro® (tris (hydroxymethyl) nitromethane)

The lists may not be complete.

When purchasing products which may come in contact with your skin, check the list of ingredients for any of the names listed above. If in doubt contact your pharmacist or physician.

This information does not substitute the information given by your health care providers and can only be seen as a supplement.