



Patient Information Leaflet

Mercapto mix

You are allergic to mercapto chemicals. This means that you should avoid contact with these substances in future.

This mix consists of the following chemicals:

- Mercaptobenzothiazole (MBT)
- N-cyclo hexylbenzothiazole sulfonamide (CBS)
- dibenzothiazyl disulphide (MBTS)
- morpholinylmercaptobenzothiazole (MMBT)

Mercapto mix thiazoles are the most frequently used rubber 'accelerators' (i.e. chemicals used to speed up polymerisation when preparing rubber). They are present in natural and synthetic rubber products. There are also non-rubber sources of exposure.

Most patients allergic to thiazoles will have been sensitised by wearing rubber shoes or insoles. Usually the rash will have been in the shape of the shoe component but this is not invariable and the rash may be on one foot only. Other sources of exposure include rubber gloves and rubber elastic in underwear.

If sensitised to thiazoles in shoes, patients should wear all-leather shoes with no inner sole (like moccasins), plastic shoes or wooden clogs. If patients have difficulty acquiring shoes without rubber insoles, they should remove the insoles before wearing and replace with those cut from piano felt, cork, or plastic. Old shoes tend to be more allergenic than new, as sweating leaches the thiazole out of the rubber in the shoe. Old socks contaminated with thiazole should be discarded.

Some information on appropriate footwear may be available from:

Satra Footwear Technology Centre, Satra House, Rockingham Road, Kettering NN16 9JH.

If gloves have been the source of sensitisation avoid rubber (latex) gloves and instead patients should use vinyl gloves (PVC), if these are appropriate. These are widely available e.g. Synsation from Ansell Medical or Tru Touch from Becton Dickinson (01865-748844). If vinyl gloves are unsuitable, patients should try Ansell Dermaprene (neoprene)- a thiazole, thiuram, carba and rubber-free variety of glove (contains thioureas) or Becton and Dickinson Neolon (neoprene) which is thiazole, thiuram, thiourea and rubber-free (contains carbamates). An alternative is Elastyren (Styrene butadiene polymer) from Hermal, Germany (00-40-72704-266) which is thiazole, thiuram, thiourea and rubber-free (contains carbamates).

Safe bandages in leg ulcer patients are those made of Viscose, Polyamide, Elastane and Cotton. Safe compression bandages are Setopress. Bandages with less compression that are safe are Rosidal K and Comprilan and for a tubular bandage use Tubigauz or Tubifast (not Tubigrip). For compression stockings, use those made from Lycra or Nylon e.g. Duo-Med.

Sources of thiazoles:

Shoes, insoles, gloves

Rubber in underwear, swimwear

Sponges, applicators, eyelash curlers, rubber masks

Rubber sheets and pillows

Bandages and medical devices
Renal dialysis equipment
Tyres and tubes
Antifreeze, anticorrosive agents
Agricultural insecticides and fungicides
Tick and flea powders and sprays
Elastic bands

Condoms and diaphragms
Balloons, toys, rubber bands
Cutting oils, greases, detergents
Neoprene adhesives e.g. shoes
Photographic film emulsion
Cements
Bicycle and golf club handles