



Patient Information Leaflet

Potassium Dichromate or Chromate

You are allergic to **potassium dichromate**, which is often referred to as '**chromate**', a salt of the metal chromium. You should avoid contact with compounds of this metal.

Common presentations: 1. **Hand dermatitis:** avoid cement and leather gloves.

2. **Foot dermatitis:** avoid leather shoes. Vegetable tanned or plastic shoes are alternatives. Vegan shoes are available from Vegetarian Shoes, 12 Gardner St., Brighton or Friends of the Earth Shop, Allison St., Birmingham; also Foot-Joy make vegan golf shoes. Ecco produce some vegetable tanned shoes.

Sources of chromate

Common sources:

1. **Cement and foundries:** added to sand for bricks, builders' filling materials. European legislation has limited the amount of chromate present in cement.
2. **Tanned leather:** shoes and gloves.
3. **Chrome plating and alloys:** e.g. screws, nuts, disks, musical instrument strings.
4. **Welding and electroplating:** welding fumes and galvanizing solutions.

Other sources:

1. **Textiles:** printing and dyeing; military green. Trivalent chromium is used as a fixation. Chromium salts dye the green baize of gaming tables.
2. **Wood preservatives and corrosion protective in paint:** in anti-freeze, oils and paints. Yellow, orange and green anti-rust primer paints.
3. **Industries:** e.g. car and aircraft, colour television tube manufacture, linings of boilers, refractory bricks in furnaces.
4. **Engraving and ceramics:** lithography, pottery glazes, lacquer.
5. **Printing uses:** photocopying paper, blueprints, printing inks, crayons, ballpoint pen ink, colour developers for photography.
6. **Cosmetics and tattoos:** chromium oxide pigment is a green dye present in eye shadow and mascara; it is also used in tattoos.
7. **Medical uses:** chromic suture material e.g. catgut (not used much now); metal alloy joint replacement.
8. **Milk testing:** preservative.
9. **Match heads and explosives:** ignition mixture, explosive manufacture.
10. **Household:** detergent, bleach, wax, polishes including shoe polish.
11. **Adhesives:** glues, epoxy resin.
12. **Diet:** chromate is present in food but dietary chromate is unlikely to be important in most chromate-allergic subjects.

Avoidance of chromate

Although changing job might mean you will avoid chromate, it does not mean your dermatitis will clear- it might well persist. The reasons why this occurs are uncertain, but it is more likely in subjects whose dermatitis is severe and chronic.