



## Patient Information Leaflet

### Cobalt Chloride

You are allergic to cobalt. You should avoid contact with this metal and its compounds. If you need to check whether cobalt is present, read the COSHH (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health) sheets or labels, write to manufacturers or ask employers.

#### Common presentation:

1. **Jewellery reactions:** cobalt is an ingredient or impurity in metals objects e.g. jewellery. Contact allergy to cobalt is often found in people who are also allergic to nickel.
2. **Hand dermatitis:** as a presentation, less common than jewellery reaction but more likely to be occupational in nature.

#### Sources of cobalt

1. **Jewellery and apparel:** earrings, chains, body-piercing jewellery, watches, spectacles, lighters, zips, studs, hooks-and-eyes, metal toe-caps, metal buttons.
2. **Electroplating:** onto utensils and tools, e.g. scissors, thimbles, needles, cutlery, keys.
3. **Medical and dental uses:** cardiac pacemakers, orthopaedic plates, cautery plates, and dental appliances (e.g. braces). Injection of cyanocobalamin (vitamin B12, which contains cobalt) may flare dermatitis in cobalt-allergic subjects.
4. **Household:** metal parts of furniture, door handles, prams.
5. **Hard metal industries:** Cobalt is added to alloys to make the metal hard. Such alloys may be used in machinery parts, e.g. for cutting tools, rock drills, pressing tools, and other mechanical parts subject to heavy use.
6. **Engraving and etching:** e.g. engraved glass, etching.
7. **Contaminant with chromate:** cobalt is found in some cements.
8. **Polyester resin manufacture:** a cobalt-containing compound is used as a contact catalyst.
9. **Drying agent:** cobalt naphthalate and cobalt oleate are used as drying agents in printing inks, varnishes and paints.
10. **Oxidizing agent:** in car exhausts.
11. **Pigment:** blue pigment in porcelain, glass, pottery, enamels and crayons. Pigment in cosmetics. Cobalt compounds are used in hair dye (light brown shades) in some countries. Some blue tattoo pigments contain cobalt.
12. **Agriculture:** chemical fertilisers, additive in animal feeds.

#### Avoidance

The advice to be given depends on the individual situation. It may be sufficient to avoid jewellery if the cobalt allergy is accompanying nickel allergy and the problem is no more than one of reacting to jewellery. However, if the clinical problem is one of cobalt allergy unrelated to co-existing nickel contact, specific advice about avoidance will be given.