

## **Patient Information**

### **Nickel Metals and Nickel Salts**

**Your TRUE TEST® indicates that you have a contact allergy to nickel.**

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

Nickel is one of the most common metals in the modern environment, both at work and at home.

#### **Where is nickel found?**

Nickel is a metal used to coat other metals to give them a shiny metallic finish. Nickel is found on the surface of common metallic and metal plated items; in some coins, on clothing as buttons, zippers and snaps, on metal utensils such as scissors and keys, on costume jewelry, watchbands and kitchen utensils. Nickel occasionally can be found in eye cosmetics but not in the European Union because nickel is prohibited in cosmetics according to the EU Cosmetic Directive.

While nickel is found in stainless steel, allergic reactions to products made with stainless steel (for example, dental and surgical instruments) are rare because only minimal amounts are released.

Nickel occurs naturally in food and this may give problems to extremely sensitive individuals.

## How to avoid nickel

Minimize skin contact with nickel. Aluminum, stainless steel, yellow gold, silver and platinum are usually safe alternative metals.

Look for clothing with non-metallic zippers and fasteners.

Use scissors, kitchen utensils, combs and other metal items with plastic or wood handles. Never wear earrings that are not guaranteed to be safe for nickel. Select a watch with a controlled stainless steel back.

Metallic items that are difficult to avoid contact with such as door keys and doorknobs can be coated with several layers polyurethane lacquer.

Food containing nickel is generally not a problem but if you are severely allergic discuss with your physician about avoiding foods that are rich in nickel. These include: Herrings, oysters, asparagus, beans, mushrooms, onions, corn, spinach, tomatoes, peas, whole meal flour, pears, all types of nuts , raisins, rhubarb, tea, cocoa, baking powder, cabbage, sprouts, all canned foods or foods cooked in nickel utensils.

Minimize wet work without protective clothing as moisture increases the penetration of nickel into the skin.

Jewelry and other metal objects can be tested easily for nickel release with a nickel spot test called the "dimethylglyoxime test" that is usually available at your pharmacy. This could be applied to control items which are in contact with your skin.

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 nickel.

## **What to look for**

### **Synonyms**

- Single nickel salt

*The list may not be complete.*

When purchasing products which may come in contact with your skin, check the list of ingredients for 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.*