

Latex Food Syndrome (Latex Fruit Syndrome)

What is Latex Food Syndrome (LFS)?

Those people with a sensitivity to Latex often find themselves developing an allergy to certain foods, due to similar proteins found in the food as well as in latex. It is sometimes referred to as Latex Fruit Syndrome, however some vegetables also contain similar proteins. The reactions experienced with these foods occur in 30-50% of people with a Latex allergy.

The science bit...

There are 15 allergens associated with allergy to latex plants. The most likely proteins associated with LFS are Hev b 6 which is a hevein and Hev b 11 which is a chitinase.

Chitinase is the protein thought to cause most instances of LFS.

Hevein is a related protein and may have some role in LFS.

Chitinase proteins are found in both animal and plant tissue. Plants produce chitinase as a defence against damage and infection. They are grouped together in classes and although they are different in their structure their general function is the same.

The plant involved in a Latex Allergy, the rubber tree plant, has an allergen present called Hev b 11 which is a chitinase protein. Those very sensitive to latex may develop a contact allergic reaction from foods, plants and insects containing similar shaped proteins.

Foods with High Cross-reactivity with Latex

- Avocado
- Banana
- Chestnut
- Kiwi

Foods with Moderate Cross-reactivity with Latex

- Apple
- Carrot
- Celery
- Melons
- Papaya
- Potato
- Tomato

Foods with Low or undetermined Cross-reactivity with Latex

- Apricot
- Buckwheat
- Cherries
- Chickpeas
- Citrus Fruit
- Coconut
- Grapes
- Hazelnut & Walnut
- Mango
- Nectarine
- Peach
- Pineapple
- Plum
- Shellfish
- Strawberry

Symptoms of an allergic reaction

The symptoms are wide ranging for those with an allergy to chitinase proteins. These can come in the form of urticaria (hives), angioedema (swelling under the skin), abdominal pain, nausea/vomiting, breathlessness, and anaphylactic shock.

Please remember!

A person sensitive to Latex may not necessarily have to ingest the above foods to have a reaction. They may experience an allergic reaction from touching latex or even smelling the item, for example, they could have a sensitivity to latex gloves, balloons, rubber bands, rubber household gloves, bandages and plasters.

Where possible the individual should avoid exposure to the food or latex products if they have found that they have a latex allergy.

<https://foodallergyaware.co.uk/resources/factsheets/>