

Facts about latex & allergies

Allergies and latex mattresses: exposing the myth

What is latex?

Latex is a white milky fluid, a stable dispersion of rubber (organic polymer) particles in water. Latexco works with two types of latex: Natural Rubber Latex and Synthetic Rubber Latex.

The natural Rubber Latex is the sap of the tropical rubber tree "Hevea Brasiliensis" that grows in large plantations in South-East Asia (Thailand, Malaysia, Vietnam, Indonesia), parts of Africa (Cameroun) and South-America (Brazil). Most of the annual world yield of natural latex is used for the production of tires, surgical gloves and preservatives. Protecting us from pathogenic viruses through the use of surgical gloves and condoms, natural latex has helped save millions of lives.

A part is dedicated to the production of sleeping products. Latexco guarantees the use of the best-quality natural latex coming from selected and controlled plantations and tested before transformation in the Latexco production process. Latexco values the use of natural latex because it not only contributes a unique elasticity and flexibility to the end product, but it also stimulates an ecological and durable production.



Since World War II and over the years the petrochemical industry has developed different types of synthetic lattices. You could say that synthetic latex is the twin brother of natural latex. Synthetic latex is primarily used for its stability in delivery and processability.

Can latex foam mattresses cause allergies?

Latex foam mattresses do not cause allergies.

There is one type of allergy "latex allergy" that can be caused by the raw material "natural latex." The vulcanization of the natural latex for the application in mattresses, upholstery, car tires, etc. exposes the latex to high temperatures and this type of vulcanized latex does not cause the latex contact or respiratory (coughing or sneezing) allergy that can be caused in approximately 1 person in 10,000 by the proteins within the untreated natural latex. It's the moulded latex used in preservatives, gloves or unwashed latex products that can cause the latex allergy.

Prof. Dr. Wim Stevens, Head of the Dpt. "Immunology, Rheumatology en Allergies" in the University Hospital of Antwerp (Belgium) and Head of the "Immunology" Laboratory of the UIA. He published over 230 scientific articles in Medical Reviews.

Many publications report that 3-10% of medical personnel are acutely sensitive to natural latex. This is typically an allergic reaction as a result of direct contact with unwashed latex products like gloves. In most cases this allergy is expressed as a rash and a skin or eye irritation. When it comes to mattress cores, the key fact you have to keep in mind is that, according to the medical literature, not a single case of allergic reaction has ever been reported as a consequence of sleeping on a natural latex mattress. The latex allergy risk connected with mattress cores is negligible, because the latex core is washed thoroughly, the proteins responsible for triggering any allergic reaction are denatured by the high temperatures during vulcanisation, and the mattress cover protects the skin against direct contact

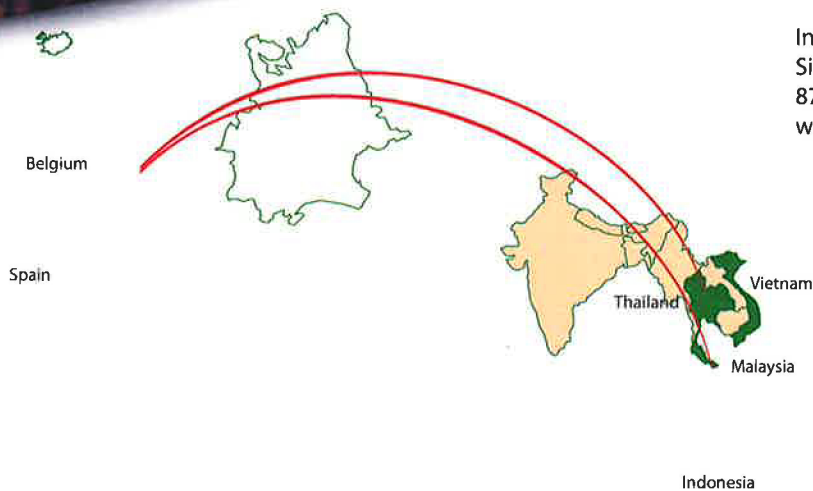


HAVINGA, J.S., Head of the Rubber-Stichting's Information Centre for Natural Rubber, Latex allergy and mattresses, address at the 5th EBIA congress, Lisbon, 16 September 2004.



The nature of sleeping

latexco
latex foam bedding products



Information from LATEXCO NV
 Sint-Amandstraat 8bis
 8700 Tielt - Belgium
www.latexco.com

Information on allergies and latex mattresses

Can latex foam mattress cores cause allergies?

Natural latex is an ideal raw material for the manufacture of products used to protect us from pathogenic viruses, such as surgical gloves and condoms. More than 20,000 billion of these products are produced every year, and as a result natural latex has helped save millions of lives.

Many publications report that 3-10% of medical personnel are acutely sensitive to natural latex. This is typically an allergic reaction as a result of direct contact with unwashed latex products like gloves.

In most cases this allergy is expressed as a rash and a skin or eye irritation.

When it comes to mattress cores, the key fact you have to keep in mind is that, **according to the medical literature, not a single case of allergic reaction has ever been reported as a consequence of sleeping on a natural latex mattress. The latex allergy risk connected with mattress cores is negligible, because the latex core is washed thoroughly, the proteins responsible for triggering any allergic reaction are denatured by the high temperatures during vulcanisation, and the mattress cover protects the skin against direct contact.**

HAVINGA, J.S., Head of the Rubber-Stichting's Information Centre for Natural Rubber, Latex allergy and mattresses, address at the fifth EBIA congress, Lisbon, 16 September 2004.