Patient Information

Your patch test result indicates that you have a contact allergy to benzyl alcohol. This contact allergy may cause your skin to react when it is exposed to this substance although it may take several days for the symptoms to appear. Typical symptoms include redness, swelling, itching, and fluid-filled blisters.

Where is benzyl alcohol found?

Benzyl alcohol is found in over-the-counter medications, topical creams, lotions, shampoos, and facial cleansers as an antibacterial, preservative, and/or fungicide. Benzyl alcohol is found in many naturally occurring plant products such as Balsam of Peru and is also a component of essential oils such as hyacinth, jasmine, and ylang ylang oils. Benzyl alcohol is also prevalent in hair dyes, shampoos, facial cleansers, sunscreens, fragrances, and cosmetics.

How can you avoid contact with benzyl alcohol?

Avoid products that list any of the following names in the ingredients:

- (Hydroxymethyl)benzene
- Benzyl alcohol
- Hydroxytoluene
- Phenylcarbinol
- alpha-Toluenol
- Benzenemethanol
- Benzyl alcohol
- Methanol, phenyl
- Phenylmethanol
- (Hydroxymethyl)benzene
- Benzyl alcohol
- Hydroxytoluene
- Phenylcarbinol
- alpha-Toluenol
- Benzenemethanol
- Benzyl alcohol
- Methanol, phenyl
- Phenylmethanol

What are some products that may contain benzyl alcohol?

- Cosmetics:
  - Lipstick
  - Mascara
  - Powder makeup
- Deodorant
- Foods:
  - Apricots
  - Cocoa
  - Cranberries
  - Honey
  - Mushrooms
  - Snap peas
- Hair Care:
  - Conditioner
  - Hair color/dye
  - Shampoo
- Industrial Products:
  - Concrete primer
  - Crack filler
  - Epoxy putty sealant
- Oral Care:
  - Cold sore gel
  - Oral anesthetic
- Shaving Creams and Gels
- Skin Care Products:
  - Baby lotion
  - Blemish remover
  - Body lotion
  - Cleansing cloths
  - Diaper rash cream
- Sunscreens

*For additional information about products that might contain benzyl alcohol, go to the Household Product Database online (householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov) at the United States National Library of Medicine. These lists are brief and provide just a few examples. They are not comprehensive. Product formulations also change frequently. Read product labels carefully and talk to your doctor if you have any questions. These are general guidelines. Talk to your doctor for more specific instructions.*