

# *Benzyl Alcohol*

You have shown a positive allergic reaction to **Benzyl Alcohol**. Avoid contact with this substance. Information about this substance is below.

## **What is it?**

Benzyl alcohol is a component of fragrances (jasmine, hyacinth, ylang-ylang oils, balsam Peru, balsam Tolu, and styrax), preservatives, and solvents.

## **How can I avoid it?**

Skin contact with benzyl alcohol is required for it to cause a rash. Discontinuation of exposure to products containing benzyl alcohol should result in improvement and/or resolution of your dermatitis. By law, all products made in the U.S. for topical use have the ingredients listed either on the product package or the box that contains it, so check the labeling of your skin care products for this ingredient. If there is no information ask your pharmacist or call the company directly. At work, request a material safety data sheet (MSDS) to help identify potential sources of exposure.

The avoidance of fragrances and flavoring agents such as benzyl alcohol can be difficult, since so many everyday products contain these substances. One should use only fragrance-free cosmetic and household products. “Unscented” products may contain low levels of a fragrance to cover up an undesirable odor and also should be avoided. Products labeled as “hypoallergenic” do not assure that the product is truly free of fragrance.

Since some fragrances are also flavors, foods can, rarely, cause flare-ups of dermatitis in fragrance-sensitive individuals. Particularly if you have oral or lip allergies as discussed with your health care provider, you should avoid foods prepared with benzyl alcohol.

Direct contact with foods or products containing benzyl alcohol may cause symptoms including burning, irritation, and redness. Direct contact may occur on the skin, lips or mouth. It is possible, but rare, that ingestion of this substance could cause generalized symptoms such as itching or redness of the skin. May cause pigmentation of the face.

## **Uses:**

- Perfumes/Colognes/After-shaves/Toilet water
- Skin care products/Cosmetics
  - Antiperspirants/Deodorants
  - Hair sprays, gels, tonics, and lotions
  - Hair Colorants/“Permanents-relaxers”
  - Soaps/Cleansers/Body wash/Towelettes
  - Shampoos/Conditioners
  - Moisturizers
  - Make-ups
  - Nail polish/Nail polish remover
  - Powders/Sprays
  - Sunscreens
  - Essential oil – jasmine, hyacinth, and ylang-ylang
- Medications, topical, prescription and over the counter such as
  - Anesthetics
  - Antiseptics
  - Creams, ointments, solutions
  - Foot and other powders
  - Nasal decongestants
  - Ophthalmic solutions
  - Preservatives in injectable drugs, intravenous medication, and allergy extracts

- Herbal remedies, including traditional Chinese medications
- Wound dressings
- Household products
  - Cleaning products/Soaps/Detergents (A preferred household cleaner is dilute white vinegar.)
  - Furniture polish
  - Insect repellent
  - Laundry care (detergent, softeners)?
  - Room fresheners
- Foods, beverages, various, as a flavoring or spice
- Oral care products as a flavoring
  - Cough mixtures
  - Toothpaste/Mouthwash
  - Throat tablets and lozenges
- Industrial/Manufacturing/Construction uses
  - Metal working fluids
  - Paints
  - Paint stripper
  - Photographic developer for color movie film
  - Plastics
  - Sheet metal
  - Solvents (eg, photography, dye stuffs, and inks)
  - Textiles
  - Water proofing
  - Woodworking
  - Solvent for inks
  - Lacquer

**Other names for Benzyl Alcohol:**

- a-Hydroxytoluene
- Alpha-toluenol
- Benzal alcohol
- Benzenecarbinol
- Benzenemethanol
- Benzoyl alcohol
- Benzylic alcohol
- d-toluenol
- Euxyl K 100
- (Hydroxymethyl)benzene
- Hydroxytoluene
- Nipaguard MPA
- Phenylcarbinol
- Phenylmethanol
- Phenylmethyl alcohol

**Potential cross-reacting/co-reacting substances:**

- Balsam of Peru
- Benzoin tincture