

## 4 Potassium Dichromate – Patient Information

Your T.R.U.E. TEST results indicate that you have a contact allergy to potassium dichromate, a form of chromium. Chromium salts or chromates in contact with your skin may result in dermatitis. 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.

Potassium dichromate is a chromium salt or chromate and is a common metal making up a significant part of the earth's crust. Chromium and chromates occur naturally in our environment, including soil and water. They are also commonly found in products made of chrome and stainless steel, cement and leather.

### Where is potassium dichromate (or chromium) found?



*At work*, you may find chromates or chromium in:

- Construction materials such as cement, mortar, concrete, bricks, plaster, drywall
- Leather tanning and product manufacturing
- Primers and chromate-based pigments in paints
- Cutting oils, corrosion inhibitors, oils, fuels and drilling muds
- Liners in high temperature industrial furnaces
- Pyrotechnics
- Printing inks
- Manufacturing, plating and metal working with chrome alloys and stainless steel
- Orthopedic and dental implants, dental prosthesis
- Wood preservative manufacturing
- Green dyes used in felt and textiles
- Chrome alloy welding fumes
- Chromic surgical gut sutures



*At home*, you may find chromates or chromium in:

- Orthopedic and dental implants, dental prosthesis
- Leather products including shoes, boots, gloves
- Pigments in inks and paints
- Construction materials such as cement, mortar, concrete, bricks, plaster, drywall
- Green dyes used in felt and textiles
- Make up
- Foods and vitamin supplements
- Pressure-treated wood
- Household repair materials

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### How can you avoid potassium dichromates (or chromium)?

- Allergic skin reactions to chromates (or chromium) can become severe and chronic. Because of this, it's important to avoid touching chromates or inhaling chrome alloy fumes or getting them on your clothing.
- Only use products that do not list chromates (or chromium) or related chemicals on the label, ingredients list or Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). If there is no information, contact the product manufacturer.
- Avoid tanned leather products unless vegetable tannins have been used. Use instead vegetable tanned leather shoes or plastic shoes. For those with shoe dermatitis from chromate and leather, wearing heavy socks and reducing perspiration and moisture may help to reduce dermatitis.
- Do not handle burnt matches or ash. Use a lighter instead
- In the workplace, avoid wet cement and mortar. Even the dust or fumes from chromate-containing products should be avoided. Chromate reduced cement added ferrous sulfate is an alternative. Change oils and cutting fluids often in machine work.
- Tell your physician, pharmacist, dentist, veterinarian, beautician and hairdresser that you are allergic to chromates (or chromium). Ask for preparations that do not contain chromates or related substances.
- Wear protective gloves and clothing. Heavy-duty and utility gloves made of natural or synthetic rubber, or vinyl, may provide enough protection for working with products that contain chromates (or chromium). Heavy-duty fabric or canvas gloves may be substituted for leather gloves.
- If you think that you contact chromates (or chromium) at work, ask your employer for MSDS or manufacturer information on the product(s). Talk to your employer about using a different product or wearing protective gloves and clothing.

### What should you look for and avoid?\*

Avoid products that list any of the following names in the ingredients, MSDS or package insert.

- **Potassium dichromate** or dipotassium dichromate (or bichromate); chromium compounds; chromium and chromium salts; chromium metal or chrome; chromic acid salts

### What are some products that may contain potassium dichromates (or chromium)?\*

- Ethicon® Chromic Surgical Gut Sutures
- Butan 129 chrome leather tanning agent
- Chromated copper arsenate wood preservative
- Chrome-nickel alloy dental crowns

### What products do NOT contain potassium dichromates (or chromium)?\*

- Ethicon® Plain Surgical Gut Sutures
- Butan 1903 aldehyde-based tanning agent
- ACQ wood preservatives (water-based copper agent)
- Porcelain dental crowns and titanium dental implants and prostheses

\*For additional information about products that might contain potassium dichromate or a related substance, go to the Household Product Database online (<http://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 questions. These are general guidelines. Talk to your doctor for more specific instructions.