



PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET: chromium

Your patch test shows that you have a contact allergy to: chromium

Synonym(s): chrome, chromate, dichromate, Cr

Definition: Chromium is a silvery-grey, hard metal used in various fields of daily life and industry.

Use and occurrence:

Chromium and its chemical compounds are present in cement, tanned leather (chromate tanning), textile dyes, paints and pigments, tattoo inks, anticorrosive agents, wood preservatives, matches, floor polishes, shoe polishes, glues and detergents. Potassium dichromate is used as a reagent in milk quality testing. Chromic-sulfuric acid is used as a cleaning agent for glassware in laboratory and industrial settings.

Chromium is an ingredient of numerous metal alloys, including ticonium alloys (which contain at least 85% Cr), chrome steel, and chromium-nickel steel. A widespread technique is chrome plating – covering metal or plastic surfaces with a thin layer of metallic chrome for protection or decoration. Chromium is also used in welding, wet photography, lithography, engraving, pressing vinyl records, ceramics, automotive industry, electronics.

Chromium may be present in, and released from, orthopaedic prostheses, dental implants and prostheses, endovascular stents and coils used for closing aneurysms, as well as other medical devices. Piercings used for body modification may also be made of chromium alloys. Chromium compounds are used as green cosmetic dyes in eyeshadows, mascaras, cosmetics based on algae and plant extracts. The presence of chromium in cosmetics is not obvious as, according to the INCI nomenclature of cosmetics ingredients, they are declared by colour index (CI) numbers, e.g. CI 77288 – chromium oxide greens.

Remarks:

Airborne cement powder and dust in building industry, as well as chromate compounds dispersed in the air in the form of aerosols and vapours (e.g. in laboratories) may cause airborne dermatitis.

Disclaimer: Always check your products as these lists can never be complete and ingredients change.