



PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET: Propolis

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

Synonym(s): bee glue, propolis cera.

Definition: propolis is a resinous substance produced by honeybees that collect materials from plants and trees (in Europe mostly poplars) and combine these with their own saliva and beeswax. Propolis has many biological properties, including antibacterial, antifungal and anti-inflammatory effects.

Use and occurrence:

- Products containing propolis are marketed in various forms such as creams, ointments, tablets, capsules, ampules, syrups, sprays and lozenges.

- Propolis is often found in cosmetics products including:

- shampoos
- conditioners
- ointments
- lotions
- lipsticks
- toothpastes
- nail varnish

- Another common use of propolis is its application in products for medicinal purposes (mainly leave-on skin products, for example in patients with leg ulcers).

- Propolis can be used as a food additive, for preserving and flavoring. It can for example be found in some brands of chewing gum.

- Other applications include the use of propolis as an adhesive, to seal cracks, to protect wooden and other surfaces, and as varnish for violins and other instruments.

Remarks:

- It is important to realize that propolis is a compound that is a mix of multiple materials. The constitution of this mix depends, amongst others, on the plants that grow near the hives of the bees that produce the propolis. The specific ingredient in propolis for which you have an allergy is not necessarily present in all products that contain propolis, since the propolis in different products comes from different places.

- The main allergens in propolis are the esters of caffeic acid, such as 3-methyl-2-butenyl caffeate, benzyl caffeate, phenethyl caffeate, and geranyl caffeate, which are also present in poplar buds. Other ingredients of propolis, like cinnamic acid and its esters (cinnamyl, benzyl, methyl), benzoic acid and benzyl benzoate may also have allergenic potential.



- Patients with an allergy to propolis might also react to *Myroxylon pereirea* (Balsam of Peru), colophonium and certain essential oils, notably clove oil.

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