

## **Additional Precautions for Theatre Managers**

In addition to the points above for wards and departments, theatre managers must take account of the increased vulnerability of the unconscious patient whose internal tissues may be in contact with a range of equipment.

- Identify all equipment used in theatres which may come into contact with patients.
- Ensure this equipment is latex free unless suitable latex free substitutes are deemed not to be reasonably practicable.
- Ensure there is no latex-containing equipment in theatre which is inflated with air or has air or gases passing through it or over it.
- When a latex sensitive patient is next on the list:
  - remove from theatre all the residual equipment which still includes latex
  - identify the surfaces this equipment touches which may subsequently be in contact with equipment (including protein-reduced latex gloves) which will touch the latex-sensitive patient
  - ensure all such surfaces are wiped with a detergent wipe
  - ensure that all glove changing before a latex sensitive patient is undertaken at least 10 minutes before the patient enters the room, where the gloves being removed contain latex.
- Ensure that theatres in which a latex sensitive patient may be treated have a ventilation rate of at least 20 ach.

The rationale for these actions is as follows:

- The degree of contact with latex which may provoke a severe reaction is unpredictable and varies between individuals. Therefore the indirect surface-to-surface contact which this procedure addresses is deemed to be potentially significant.
- Some highly sensitive individuals react to tiny quantities of latex in the air. While the threshold for such effects is not known (and neither is it feasible to measure the concentration of the relevant proteins in the atmosphere) it is considered that the measures prescribed (the general removal of latex during the treatment of a sensitive patient, the complete elimination of latex from equipment which is inflated or has air or gases passing through or over it, and the 10 minutes allowed between the removal of a low protein latex glove and the entry of a sensitive patient into the room) will reduce the risk of a reaction by airborne contamination to an extremely low level.