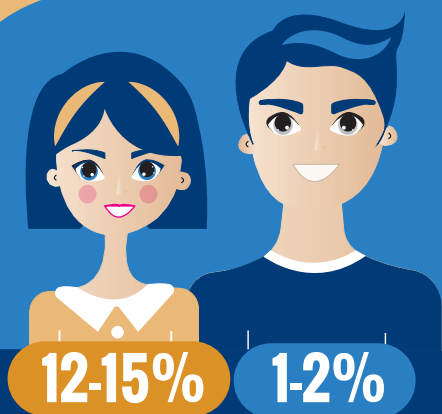


# WHAT DO YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT NICKEL ALLERGY?

## WHAT IS NACD?

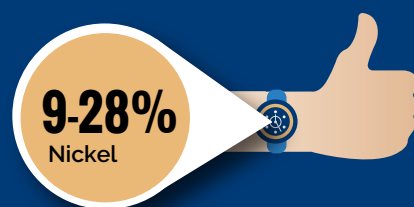
Nickel allergic contact dermatitis (NACD) is a rash or eczema on the skin of people who are nickel-allergic. NACD is not a life threatening allergy and symptoms can be managed by limiting contact with items that release a lot of nickel.

Nickel allergy is not inherited but acquired by some people who are in direct and prolonged skin contact with items releasing high levels of nickel. Once a person is allergic to nickel, it takes less nickel release to the skin to cause NACD than the amount initially needed to make the person nickel-allergic.



NACD affects more women than men. On average 12% to 15% of women and 1% to 2% of men are allergic to nickel. A very small proportion of the nickel-allergic population are hyper-sensitive. Hyper-sensitive people react to lower amounts of nickel released than is typical for the nickel-allergic population as a whole. These individuals need to take additional precautions beyond those described here.

Items can contain nickel and be used without making people allergic to nickel or triggering NACD in those already nickel-allergic. For example, nickel-containing stainless steels are used by high quality watch manufacturers. Such high quality stainless steels contain 9% to 28% nickel but do not release sufficient amounts of nickel to cause a nickel allergy.

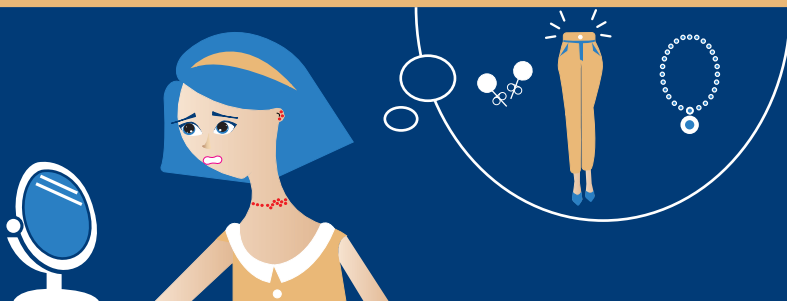


NACD can cause discomfort such as itching and rash. But it is NOT life-threatening and CANNOT cause anaphylactic shock, unlike some other common allergens.

Three simultaneous conditions must occur to trigger NACD:

- **1.** Direct skin contact with nickel-releasing item
- +**
- **2.** Prolonged skin contact with nickel-releasing item
- +**
- **3.** A sufficient amount of nickel is released and absorbed into the skin to cause a NACD reaction

Items that potentially release high amounts of nickel such as some types of jewellery, items worn in piercings or clothing fasteners, may cause NACD in nickel-allergic people when the three simultaneous conditions occur.



Nickel-allergic people can effectively manage NACD by avoiding direct and prolonged skin contact with items that could release enough nickel to cause a reaction. Once the contact stops, NACD symptoms will start to disappear. Consult a dermatologist for more information on managing NACD symptoms and avoiding NACD reactions.

## DO YOU WANT TO KNOW MORE?



Get in touch with the Nickel Institute. The Nickel Institute fosters open communication towards prevention and understanding of NACD.



Check our website for practical and useful information on NACD and the appropriate uses of nickel.



Ask an Expert, through our free online Technical Inquiry Service via our website.