

Nickel Allergic Contact Dermatitis

Position Paper of the Nickel Institute

Revised July 2012

The Nickel Institute believes nickel allergy is a preventable condition and that appropriate regulation or, in the absence of regulation, voluntary industry initiatives can provide a high level of protection against nickel allergy sensitisation and nickel-induced allergic contact dermatitis

Nickel allergy can occur as a consequence of direct and prolonged contact with pierced skin or with the surface of the skin by some (but not all) articles that contain nickel.

To this end, and **for articles intended for direct and prolonged contact with the skin**, the Nickel Institute:

- supports the view that there are two critical factors to be taken into account when assessing and managing the risks associated with nickel allergic contact dermatitis:
 - (a) the ability of and rate at which a material surface releases nickel when exposed to sweat and
 - (b) the nature of the contact with the skin, in particular its duration and intimacy;
- supports the view that both high nickel release rate, and direct and prolonged contact as the two factors have to be present in order for there to be a risk of sensitisation of non-sensitised individuals or initiation of an allergic reaction in a previously sensitised individual;
- believes that the “artificial sweat test” for the determination of nickel release rate (EN1811) is relevant to skin contact exposures.

For articles used to pierce the skin and/or for placement in the wound after piercing for the period of healing, the Nickel Institute:

- supports the view that the critical factor is the ability of and rate at which the surface of an article releases nickel in relevant environments and body fluids.
- supports the view that it is prudent to have the nickel release level for such items lower than for articles intended for direct and prolonged contact with the skin.

In order for measures protective of the public to be best achieved, the Nickel Institute:

- believes that the marketplace should be regulated and to that end the Nickel Institute will actively support and promote appropriate regulatory initiatives;

- believes that in the absence of appropriate regulation, voluntary industry initiatives can significantly reduce the incidence of sensitisation and initiation of an allergic reaction in a previously sensitised individual;
- supports efforts to improve test methods that will reliably identify articles that may cause nickel sensitisation or cause an allergic reaction in a previously sensitised individual.

Further information and Advisory Notes can be found at www.nickelinstitute.org

The Nickel Institute is a nonprofit organization that represents the interests of 25 companies which together produce more than 75% of the world's annual nickel output. We promote on behalf of our members the production, use and re-use (through recycling) of nickel in a socially and environmental responsible manner.

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