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Prevention of contact dermatitis. New possibilities through new legislation

Carola Lidén, Professor

Department of Occupational and Environmental Dermatology, Stockholm County Council, Norrbacka, SE-171 76 Stockholm, Sweden. Tel +46-8-5177 3617, Fax +46-8-344445. E-mail: carola.liden@smd.sll.se.



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Contact dermatitis is often caused by allergenic substances in various kinds of products. Legislation can be a use-

Table I. EU legislation relevant for the prevention of contact dermatitis (examples)

Nickel Directive	Limits nickel: 1) during epithelialization after piercing (content <0.05%); 2) in objects for direct and prolonged contact with the skin (release <0.5µg/cm ² /week); 3) coated objects in 2) shall fulfil the requirements after 2 years of normal use.
Cosmetics Directive	Lists allowed, not allowed and restricted substances. Full ingredient identification according to uniform nomenclature (INCI) is required.
Dangerous Substances Directive	360 substances are classified as skin sensitisers (R 43).
Dangerous Preparations Directive	Chemical products containing classified substances have to be labelled with a warning.

ful tool in the prevention of contact dermatitis, by limiting skin exposure to contact allergens in chemical products, cosmetics and hygiene products and nickel-containing objects that come in contact with the skin (1). The most important EU directives and some national regulations aiming at the prevention of contact dermatitis are presented in Tables I and II. A number of European and international standardisation projects (CEN and ISO) are of great relevance, such as standards for control according to the EU Nickel Directive. It is essential that dermatologists and other scientific experts on contact dermatitis support the national and European authorities with their expert knowledge, so that legislation and regulations will be

Table II. National regulations with limitations aiming at the prevention of contact dermatitis (examples)

Denmark	Nickel in certain products (release)
Sweden	Nickel in ear-piercing materials (nickel content)
Nordic countries	Chromate in cement
Finland	Formaldehyde in clothes
Germany	Wet work in workplaces

clinically relevant and effective for the prevention of contact dermatitis.

Reference

- Lidén C. Legislative and preventive measures related to contact dermatitis. Contact Dermatitis 2001; 44: 65-69.