

Latex Allergy Concerns

It is not uncommon for individuals who suffer from allergies to natural latex to express concern regarding the latex used in carpet manufacturing.

Natural latex is obtained from some plants and, primarily, from the rubber tree *Hevea brasiliensis*, which is indigenous to South America, and can also be found in Southeast Asia. Because the milky white, gummy latex sap obtained from this tree is derived from living organisms, it contains more than 200 extractible natural protein enzymes that can sensitize some individuals, leading to various latex protein allergic reactions. Included, but not limited to these reactions are hives, rash, itching; nasal, eye and sinus irritation; and asthma.

Today's carpets utilize Carboxylated Styrene Butadiene Rubber (SBR) as a backcoat and laminate (binder) compound. SBR is a water emulsion of synthetic latex manufactured by polymerization of high purity compounds that have not shown to invoke allergic reactions. One of the world's most versatile rubber compounds, SBR is also used in the manufacturing of auto and light truck tires, belts, hoses and gaskets, clutch and brake pads, paper coating, chewing gum, children's toys, sporting goods, adhesives, sealants, fire protective coatings, and physician's examination gloves used to examine patients sensitive to natural rubber.