

This podcast is presented by Boticário Group.

P: Hello, everyone! We are here today with Dr. Monique to talk about allergies, irritation and intolerance that some cosmetics can cause on the skin. How are you, doctor?

M: I'm great! Thank you for the invitation, it's really nice to talk about this topic here today.

P: Thank you for your participation. We have some questions here, and we would like your help to understand them. First question: Doctor, what is the difference between irritation and allergy?

M: This is a particularly good question because many people confuse allergies with skin irritation. And although both of them can manifest with red, flaking and itchy skin, they are different.

The difference is that allergy will only occur in those people who are truly allergic to some cosmetic component. These people often don't know they are allergic, they use a product, and then start to have these effects on their skin after using it.

Let's have an example of someone who is allergic to nail polish: not everyone is allergic to nail polish, but if one person who is allergic starts using nail polish, they begin to experience redness, itchiness, often on the skin, around the nails and, in this case, we can also have changes in the skin of the eyelids and neck. Those who are not allergic will not experience any of this, they will not feel anything. This happens because people who are allergic to nail polish are most commonly allergic to two components that may exist in this product, toluene and formaldehyde. When this person starts using nail polish, they begin to experience changes in their skin. An interesting piece of information here is that these components (toluene and formaldehyde) are not used in any product from Boticário Group.

On the other hand, irritation can occur in people who are not allergic to specific components. This is much more common than specific allergies. Irritation often happens because the person using the product is using it incorrectly, in the wrong way, or because they are using a product that is not specific for their skin type.

Let's have another example. A person who has oily skin and pimples suddenly starts using some products for treatment. And then, wanting to solve it quickly, this person decides to start using a soap, an exfoliator, a toner, and a cream that contains acid. They start using different products, all at the same time, and several times a day. What ends up happening is that this person also starts experiencing red and flaking skin. Why does it happen? No products were being used in this skin and, suddenly, the person starts using several products. All of them have an exfoliation effect on the skin. In this case, the person doesn't have an allergy, but an irritation, because nothing was being used in the skin and suddenly it receives many products at the same time, so it becomes sensitive.

Today, our hands is a part of our body's skin that is suffering a lot from this irritation. It happens because we need to wash our hands several times, use alcohol gel many times a day and, repeatedly. So, the skin on our hands becomes drier and in more severe cases it can even result in cracked skin.

P: That's interesting, doctor. So, it also shows the importance of always consulting a dermatologist, reading which ingredients are part of the products being used, learning about their compounds, so as not to have any skin irritation or allergy.

M: Yes, uh-huh.

P: Okay! There is another question here. Many consumers have some doubts about the difference between allergy and food intolerance. Are they the same thing?

M: This is also a quite common question and, in fact, allergies and food intolerances are not the same thing. When we talk about allergies and intolerances, the most common thought is about milk and gluten. And what is the difference between allergy and intolerance in this case?

People who are allergic to milk or gluten cannot come into contact even with small amounts of milk or gluten, because they can start to develop red spots on their skin, itching and even swelling of the eyelid and lip. More severe cases can cause glottis edema blocking the airway. So, this is extremely serious. Ideally, these people should not come into contact with cosmetics that contain dairy or gluten derivatives, especially those that can be accidentally ingested, such as lipsticks, face or hand creams.

In case of intolerance, what happens is that these people are unable to properly digest milk or gluten. They can even come into contact with small amounts of milk or gluten, which is unlikely to cause these more severe manifestations, although, of course, it is also not advised to have this contact in large quantities or frequency.

P: All right. And talking a little about people with celiac disease, or those who are intolerant, can they use a cosmetic that contains gluten and milk components, or it has nothing to do with it? How does this work, doctor?

M: So, in fact people who have celiac disease are those who have gluten intolerance. These people can use cosmetics with gluten. Of course, in the case of cosmetics that can sometimes be accidentally ingested, such as lipstick, face creams, or hand creams, these people should also avoid using products with gluten. However, it is not a mandatory necessity, because we understand that, in cases of gluten intolerant people, it is not such a big problem.

P: Good to know! Here's a tip for those who have some intolerance, you can use the product with no worries, since it won't affect you. Now that we know a little about the difference between irritation, allergies, intolerances... tell us a little about the difference between hypoallergenic products and products for sensitive skin?

M: In this case, before talking about the products, I think it's interesting to explain the difference between allergic and sensitive skin. People with allergy, when they come into contact with some cosmetics, their skin will start to turn red, itch, and blisters can appear... it causes what we call dermatitis, or in other words, skin inflammation.

People who have sensitive skin, when they come into contact with cosmetics, they may experience a stinging, burning sensation, but this skin will not present signs like the allergic skin, it will not turn red or have other symptoms. People with sensitive skin experience much more discomfort when using some products, without necessarily having these visible changes to their skin. This happens when the person doesn't actually have an allergy to some cosmetic components, but it's just a kind of skin that reacts differently.

And even hypoallergenic products, which are usually used by people who have allergies, can cause some reactions.

That's why it's important to differentiate these skin types, because they have distinct characteristics and will therefore need different products. Normally, hypoallergenic products don't contain some substances that commonly cause allergies, such as preservatives, pigments, or dyes. Sensitive skin products, in addition to not containing these substances that often react on sensitive skin, may also contain active ingredients that reduce skin sensitivity, such as some more specific moisturizers or some anti-inflammatory substances to decrease sensitivity.

P: That's interesting, doctor. Wow, lots of cool tips! I'm also here to clear up several doubts and even myths that we have about these terms, about this subject. There's one more question here to end our podcast, which is: If I have an allergy when using a cosmetic product, what should I do? So, could you give us and our consumers some tips in case they have an allergy or irritation? What is the procedure? What do we have to do? So that it doesn't get worse, right? We often don't know what to do and the problem ends up getting worse. What's your advice? Can you give us some tips, doctor?

M: So, I think the first important thing is not to despair. When such a situation happens, when we suddenly start to use a cosmetic product and see changes in our skin, like redness and flaking, we get very worried, kind of lost, and we don't know what to do. So, sometimes we actually end up doing things we shouldn't, things that can even make the situation worse.

First of all: take a deep breath, stay calm, try to understand a little better what is going on. And it is extremely important to interrupt the use of the product. We noticed that some people, when presenting these conditions, think that it might not be because of the product, so they continue using it and then the problem gets worse or become more severe.

Many of these reactions, like redness and flaking, will improve when the use of the product is interrupted and will not require other treatments. Sometimes there's some irritability, the skin becomes a little more sensitive in one specific point, just by stopping the use of the product, it will get better.

Still, some cases are more persistent and, in fact, end up being an allergy that the person did not know they had, and just found out after using the product.

Then, it's interesting to talk about this with a dermatologist to better investigate what actually happened, whether it is really an allergy caused by a cosmetic or some of its components, or something more specific or whether it is a more special condition. Sometimes it's just an irritation, and in this case, the doctor will find the best way for the skin to recover quickly.

P: Doctor, we have one more question concerning heavy metals. I think there are many consumers who don't know what they are and that they make a big difference in the products and cosmetics that we use. Can you explain a little bit?

M: This question is quite controversial, but it always comes up. These heavy metals actually exist in products, and it is normal for many people to be concerned about the information that cosmetics may contain heavy metals and, yes, some of them may have.

They are normally heavy metals such as lead, nickel, which can appear in some cosmetics, especially those that have pigments, dye, like some lipsticks... this happens not because of an intentional addition of these heavy metals, they simply appear sometimes because of the use of these pigments. So, we know they can be present. Companies already have several ways to control these levels, keeping the level of these substances very low, in a safe way, without posing any health risk.

Boticário Group is a company that really cares about this. In products where metals may appear they are normally in much lower concentrations than those recommended by regulatory bodies such as Anvisa, for example.

P: Perfect, doctor! Once again, thank you very much for your time. I think that now we have a lot of tips, a lot of precious information for our consumers and for our daily lives, especially with all these changes in our routine, we need more self-care and well-being to take care of ourselves at this moment. Thank you, doctor!

M: Thank you!

You listened to: Transparent Beauty podcast from Boticário Group.