



## **Nickel Handout**

You are allergic to nickel. This metal allergen accounts for most, but not all, costume jewelry reactions. Nickel objects often are shiny and look chrome plated. Not all metal will contain nickel. Direct skin contact with the metal object containing nickel will cause a rash at that specific site. (For example, metal eyelash curlers may cause eyelid rashes. Cleaning your ears with a metal bobby pin may cause ear canal rashes. Metal pins and snaps in clothing may cause spots of itchy, reddened skin at such sites as around the belly button.) Stainless steel contains nickel, but it is so tightly bound to the metal that it will not get into your skin and cause problems. In general, it takes about 3 minutes of skin contact with a metal object to start to move the nickel from the metal into your skin. Wet contact with metal will shorten the length of time for the transfer to occur and start a rash. A test kit is available from Allerderrn Laboratories, P.O. Box 2070, Petaluma, CA 94953. This kit will allow you to test metal items for the presence of nickel at home or work. Keep in mind that nickel will go through rubber gloves with or without cotton liners. A avoidance of skin contact is the key to getting better.

### **Diet Suggestions for Nickel-Sensitive People**

Sometimes after avoiding all skin contact with an allergen, such as nickel or chromate, the rash may persist. In some cases, the same amounts of these allergens that occur naturally in foods will be responsible for the rash continuing. When this is the case, it is necessary to avoid the foods listed below for 3 to 4 weeks to rid the body of a continued stimulation that could be causing the rash. If your skin improves with the diet, you may add back one food per week to see if your rash returns or flares. This will confirm the importance of continuing to avoid the food in question. It will also assure that you are not needlessly giving up a food you enjoy. Frequently, only one or two food items will be critical to you getting better. It is necessary to begin with a strict avoidance of all the possibilities in order to determine the role of diet in your care. Various food items and drinks can aggravate nickel eczema even though the nickel content of these foods may be low. Such food items include beer, wine, (in particular red wine), herring, mackerel, tuna, tomato, onion, carrot, and certain fruits, in particular, apples and citrus fruits (juice). The vegetables mentioned can usually be tolerated when cooked. The first liter (quart) of water taken from the tap in the morning should not be used in food preparation, as nickel may be released from the tap during the night. Nickel plated kitchen utensils, such as egg-beaters and tea balls, should be replaced. Acid foods such as stewed fruits and rhubarb cooked in stainless steel utensils should be avoided. The acids in the foods can cause nickel to be released from the utensils. Tinned foods should be eaten only in moderation.

Food Category	Okay to Eat	Avoid
Meat, Fish, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eggs</li> <li>• Fish</li> <li>• Meat (all kinds)</li> <li>• Poultry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shellfish (shrimp, mussels, crawfish)</li> </ul>
Dairy Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Butter</li> <li>• Cheese</li> <li>• Milk (in all forms)</li> <li>• Yogurt (unflavored)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chocolate Milk</li> </ul>
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Asparagus</li> <li>• Beets (red)</li> <li>• Broccoli</li> <li>• Brussels Sprouts</li> <li>• Cabbage (white, Chinese)</li> <li>• Cauliflower</li> <li>• Corn</li> <li>• Cucumber</li> <li>• Dill</li> <li>• Eggplant</li> <li>• Garlic (in moderation)</li> <li>• Mushrooms</li> <li>• Onions (in moderation)</li> <li>• Parsley</li> <li>• Peppers (green, red)</li> <li>• Potatoes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Beans (green, brown, white)</li> <li>• Kale</li> <li>• Leeks</li> <li>• Lettuce</li> <li>• Lentils</li> <li>• Peas (green, split)</li> <li>• Soy protein powder (used in sausage sandwich mean, bread, soup, concentrates, bouillon, etc.)</li> <li>• Spinach</li> <li>• Sprouts (made from beans and Lucerne)</li> </ul>
Grains and Grain Products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breakfast foods made of rice</li> <li>• Cakes and biscuits (not containing almonds, other nuts, cocoa, or chocolate)</li> <li>• Cornflakes</li> <li>• Cornmeal</li> <li>• Cornstarch</li> <li>• Macaroni</li> <li>• Popcorn</li> <li>• Rice (polished, white rice in moderation)</li> <li>• Spaghetti</li> <li>• Wheat Flour</li> <li>• Whole grain rye and wheat bread (in moderation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bran</li> <li>• Buckwheat</li> <li>• Millet</li> <li>• Mulsi and other similar breakfast cereal products</li> <li>• Multi-grain breads</li> <li>• Oatmeal</li> <li>• Rice (unpolished)</li> <li>• Rye Bran</li> <li>• Sesame seeds</li> <li>• Sunflower seeds</li> <li>• Wheat bran and other bran and fiber products including cereals, bran biscuits, fiber tables</li> <li>• Whole grain breads and biscuits</li> </ul>
Fruits, Berries, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bananas (in moderation)</li> <li>• Berries (all except raspberries)</li> <li>• Peaches</li> <li>• Pears</li> <li>• Raisins</li> <li>• Rhubarb</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dates</li> <li>• Figs</li> <li>• Pineapple</li> <li>• Prunes</li> <li>• Raspberries</li> </ul>
Drinks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alcoholic Beverages (distilled products and drinks made from these)</li> <li>• Carbonated beverages</li> <li>• Coffee and tea (not too strong and in moderation)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Chocolate and Cocoa drinks</li> <li>• Tea from drink dispensers</li> </ul>
Miscellaneous	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Margarine</li> <li>• Yeast</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Almonds</li> <li>• Baking powder (in large amounts)</li> <li>• Hazel nuts and other nuts</li> <li>• Linseed, Linseed oil</li> <li>• Peanuts</li> <li>• Sweets containing chocolate, marzipan, nuts, strong licorice</li> <li>• Vitamins containing nickel</li> </ul>