

Criteria for allergy-friendly detergents and cleaning products

Basic situation

Detergents can cause skin irritation in persons with sensitive skin or atopic dermatitis. These irritations can be minimized by special formulation properties.

The ECARF Seal of Quality recognizes detergents that are shown to cause no negative allergic reactions of the skin of persons with sensitive or allergic skin.

The necessary evidence includes an examination and valuation of the formulation and an application test. Both tests are explained in more detail below.

1. Product Composition

The particular formulation properties result from the selection and concentration of ingredients. For both – tolerability of the substance and acceptable concentration levels – must exist empirical or theoretical evidence. The proof of tolerability can be provided by at least one of the following possibilities:

- Allergen substances are reduced (“Minimal composition”),
- The product’s composition is particularly skin-friendly (“suitable for sensitive skin”, etc.),
- Abstinance of substances which are typically used in such products and which could be problematic for allergic persons,
- The product composition has a reduced risk potential (“no preservatives”, “no dust build-up” etc.) in comparison with
a standard product of the same type,
- Substances are used in amounts below the critical threshold values as determined in experiments or clinical studies.

2. User test of the target group

The product composition is tested in a user test of the target group. First, clothes need to be washed with the detergent according to the instructions for dosage. These clothes are then worn over a period of minimum 7 days by approx. 20 individuals with medically diagnosed symptoms of atopic dermatitis. In order to prove a product’s suitability for allergic persons and achieve the certificate of allergy-friendliness, it is crucial that none of the patients show signs of worsening allergic symptoms during a specific period of time. This time frame needs to be determined before the beginning of the study.