

Criteria for allergy-friendly laundry products

BACKGROUND

Laundry products can, in rare cases, provoke allergic reactions due to the ingredients they contain, such as preservatives or fragrances. ECARF-certified laundry products have proven in scientific tests that no side effects are expected from their use. However, despite meticulous product formulation and testing, allergic reactions cannot be completely ruled out in individual cases. The manufacturers of allergy-friendly laundry products must meet the following criteria for their product(s).

1. CRITERIA

1.1. Ingredients

Allergy-friendly laundry products may not contain irritating ingredients at concentrations that exceed their respective threshold values.

This property must be confirmed through the tests indicated below. As a rule, laundry products of all categories may only contain ingredients that have no allergic potential in the concentrations used.

In addition, depending on the product category (liquid detergent, washing powder, concentrated detergent, laundry pods; fabric conditioner [liquid, pods]) they must meet other standards:

- **Fragrances**
In 1999, SCCNFP (Scientific Committee on Cosmetic and Non-Food Products intended for Consumers) identified 26 fragrances with a higher allergenic potential than other fragrances. ECARF certified products may not contain any of these 26 fragrances, or may only contain them in trace amounts below the allergenic threshold. However, fragrances can also improve product quality. There is no objection to the use of non-allergenic fragrances or fragrances in concentrations below the allergenic threshold.
- **Preservatives**
The use of preservatives may be unavoidable for certain products due to the risk of harmful contamination that may occur in their absence. Preservatives should be used only at the lowest possible concentrations.
- **Benzyl Alcohol**
An exception is made for benzyl alcohol, which acts as both a fragrance and a preservative. Since the allergenic potential of benzyl alcohol is considered very low, this ingredient may be used at a concentration of less than 1%.

Banned ingredients:

- Fragrances subject to individual labelling
- Type I allergens: Allergy-friendly laundry products may not contain food allergens (such as wheat protein, walnut protein, peanut protein, almond protein, macadamia nut protein, etc.). Specifically, evidence must be provided that the substance does not contain any protein, since the protein is a type I allergy trigger.

The concentrations of the following categories of substances are the deciding factor. This is individually evaluated by dermatologists:

- Dyes

Based on the above-mentioned criteria as well as international standards, ECARF dermatologists and allergologists analyse the product formula and ingredients.

1.2. Subject testing

The product's tolerability in persons with sensitive, eczema-prone skin must be proven in clinical tests involving human subjects. Tolerability is demonstrated in a usage test corresponding to the product application. 20 subjects of the designated user group with sensitive skin and medically diagnosed atopic dermatitis are included in the test, during which they wear an item of clothing washed with the laundry product.

Allergy friendliness will be considered clinically proven if none of the subjects experience significant worsening of their condition within a period of 7 days, apart from typical variations in skin condition due to atopic dermatitis.

2. QUALITY CONTROL AND COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT

The manufacturer has established a functional system of quality control that effectively documents, processes and follows up complaints. The system ensures the following:

- The manufacturer's contact details, such as the address, telephone number and/or email address, are clearly visible on the product packaging;
- Consumer complaints are handled and followed up in an appropriate manner by qualified and experienced personnel of the manufacturer;
- The assessment of consumer complaints and, if applicable, any inferred areas of improvement are reapplied to product quality and safety. The manufacturer agrees to make this data available to ECARF on an ongoing basis.