

Criteria for allergy-friendly dishwasher tabs

BACKGROUND

In rare cases, dishwasher tabs can provoke allergic and/or irritant reactions due to the ingredients they contain, such as preservatives, fragrances or alcohol-based additives. Scientific tests can demonstrate that they are not likely to cause side effects. However, despite meticulous product formulation and testing, allergic and/or irritant reactions cannot be completely ruled out in individual cases.

The ECARF Seal of Quality certifies dishwasher tabs that are proven not to worsen the condition of the eyes, nose and airways in people with allergies or sensitive airways.

The manufacturers of allergy-friendly dishwasher tabs must meet the following criteria for their product(s):

1. CRITERIA

1.1. Ingredients

Allergy-friendly dishwasher tabs 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, dishwasher tabs of all categories may only contain ingredients that have no allergic potential in the concentrations used.

Furthermore, they must comply with additional standards, depending on the product category:

- **Fragrances**
In 1999, the SCCNFP (Scientific Committee on Cosmetic Products and Non-Food Products) identified a set of 26 fragrances with a higher potential to cause allergies in comparison to 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 effective concentrations or not at all. Methylisothiazolinone and certain derivatives, Kathon CG (MCI/MI) and/or iodopropynyl butylcarbamate cannot be used in any formulations.
- **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%.

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 is evaluated in a **subject test (mucous membrane test)** on approximately 20 asthmatics with bronchial hyperactivity, which allows an evaluation of the corresponding product group when used as recommended by the manufacturer.
- The product is **considered allergy-friendly** if it is demonstrated that no significant, clinically relevant deterioration occurs in any of the subjects within an exposure period of 15 min. to max. 30 min. (mucous membrane test).

2. QUALITY CONTROL AND COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT

The manufacturer has established a functional system of quality control that responds effectively to consumer 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.