

## Metals that often contain nickel

- Gold – yellow and white
- Silver, sterling silver, silver plate
- Palladium
- Chrome (or chromate)
- Cobalt Alloys

## Suitable replacements for nickel

- Aluminum
- Titanium
- Platinum
- Plastic
- Wood

Because many goods are manufactured in developing countries, it is recommended you test even “safe” metals occasionally, and especially if symptoms arise.

## Additional considerations

**Weather:** In summer, perspiration aids the transfer of nickel salts to the skin, increasing symptoms.

**Diet:** Severely allergic individuals may choose to avoid foods which are rich in nickel. Dietary intake of some foods has been shown to aggravate dermatitis especially hand dermatitis. Your doctor may instruct you to avoid some foods which typically contain higher amounts of nickel, including asparagus, chocolate, peanuts, beans, peas, rhubarb, cabbage, oysters, spinach, herring, tea, mushrooms, whole meal flour, pears, sprouts, corn, raisins, onions, tomatoes and baking powder.

**Medical:** Tell your physician that you are nickel allergic. Verify all dental appliances and surgical implants are nickel free prior to implantation.

This information is intended to educate the reader about nickel allergy.



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**ALLERGY CANADA LTD**

**Allergy Canada** carries solutions for nickel testing and coating liquid to prevent nickel from contacting your skin. Allergy Canada carries an extensive line of products, which are certified to be free of all nickel; including the base metal, hardware and plating. These can be viewed and purchased online.

Allergy Canada specializes in allergy solutions and distributes the finest allergy care products for patients and medical professionals across Canada.



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# Nickel Allergy

## Patient Information



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## Symptoms

Nickel allergy is a very common form of Allergic Contact Dermatitis. An eczema-like rash develops after contact with nickel and may have the following characteristics: redness, itching, swelling, hives, and/or cracks.

## Causes

Piercing is a major cause of nickel allergy. Anytime the skin is injured, prolonged contact with nickel can cause an allergic reaction. Nickel salts from the jewelry, belt buckles or other metal objects penetrate the skin and cause the sensitization. Once an individual is sensitized to nickel, symptoms will appear with nickel contact.

Nickel allergy is considered a Delayed Type IV Allergy meaning an allergic reaction occurs about 48 hours after nickel contact.

## Treatment

For immediate relief, your doctor may recommend steroid cream to help reduce inflammation and redness. Nickel allergy rashes usually clear once contact with nickel is stopped. It is important to identify the source of nickel and avoid it. The key to avoiding nickel is to identify it BEFORE your skin does.



All metal items suspected of containing nickel can be tested with a dimethyl glyoxime test called **Nickel Alert™**. This solution quickly, safely, and easily tests jewelry and other metal items for the presence of nickel.

## Where nickel is found

Nickel is frequently used in metal and metal plated objects including gold because it is inexpensive, durable, and lustrous.

Often it is difficult to identify the nickel source because a rash might not appear for two days. It is critical to test all metal items since there are often multiple sources of exposure.

## Common items that often contain and release nickel

- Belts and buckles
- Earrings and rings
- Necklaces and bracelets
- Costume/heirloom jewelry
- Buttons and snaps
- White and yellow gold
- Zippers and fasteners
- Hand tools and scissors
- Keys and coins
- Eyeglass frames
- Watches and bands
- Brass or chrome fixtures
- Kitchen utensils
- Silverware
- Bra hooks
- Suspender clips
- Hair pins
- Handbag clutches
- Jean studs
- Pocket knives
- Pens
- Lipstick holders
- Powder compacts
- Cell phones

The lists are thorough, but not exhaustive.

## Nickel free and hypoallergenic jewelry



Jewelry labeled “nickel free” or “hypoallergenic” often refers only to the plating. The base metal may contain nickel. Once the plating wears thin, even microscopically,

nickel salts will come in contact with your skin and symptoms can occur.

Expensive jewelry may also contain nickel in the base metal. Test your jewelry regularly, even the “safe” items, using the dimethylglyoxime test—**Nickel Alert™**.

## When avoidance of nickel is not possible

Avoiding nickel is ideal, but not always possible. When avoidance of nickel is not possible coat the metal that contacts your skin (jean studs, eyeglass frames, etc.) with **Nickel Guard™**. Avoid generic nail polishes; they often contain toluene, formaldehyde and dibutyl phthalate which can lead to even more sensitization for nickel allergic individuals.

You can get nickel free belts, buckles, jewelry, buttons and rivets from **Allergy Canada.com**

