

Patient Information

Thiomersal

Your TRUE Test™ indicates that you have a contact allergy to thiomersal.

Thiomersal in contact with your skin may result in dermatitis. Brief or occasional contact may not pose a problem.

Thiomersal is an antiseptic and a preservative also known as Thimerosal and Merthiolate®. Your allergy is probably explained by exposure to thiomersal preserved vaccines and has usually little actual significance for your skin.

Where is thiomersal found?

Thiomersal was formerly used in many cosmetics, topical medications and vaccines but is today removed from most products.

Thiomersal is still used widely as a preservative in vaccines, antitoxins, tuberculin tests and desensitization solutions.

Thiomersal allergy may be connected with photoallergy to piroxicam, a non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drug (NSAID).

How to avoid thiomersal

Use only ingredient-labeled cosmetics, eye, ear and nose preparations and topical medications that do not list thiomersal or any of its synonyms.

Live-virus vaccines, including influenza, tick borne encephalitis, hepatitis vaccine and many heat-killed or recombinant vaccines may contain thiomersal. In general, patients with thiomersal allergy will not react to thiomersal when the vaccine is given in the muscle. In some patients, however, thiomersal-containing vaccines can cause local or systemic dermatitis. Since this reaction is not life threatening, discuss with your physician the risks versus benefits of being vaccinated with thiomersal-containing vaccines for which there are no alternatives.

Avoid anti-inflammatory drugs, both topical and systemic, with piroxicam.

Inform your healthcare providers that you are allergic to thiomersal and ask for preparations that do not contain this substance or any other allergen to which you are likely to react.

What to look for

Synonyms for thiomersal

- o Ethylmercury sodium salt
- o Ethyl (2-mercaptobenzoato-S) mercury sodium salt
- o Mercurochrome®
- o Mercurothiolate
- o Merfamin
- o Merthiolate®
- o Mertorgan
- o Merzonin
- o Sodium ethylmercurithiosalicylate
- o Thiomersalate
- o Thimerosal
- o Thiomersalan[(o-carboxyphenyl)thio]

Related substances to which you may react

- o Rarely other organic mercury compounds (metallic mercury, as in dental fillings, is not an organic mercury compound)
- o Piroxicam (Feldene®)

The list may not be complete.

When purchasing products which may come in contact with your skin, check the list of ingredients for any of the names listed above. If in doubt contact your pharmacist or physician.

This information does not substitute the information given by your health care providers and can only be seen as a supplement.