

Patient Information

Balsam of Peru

Your TRUE TEST® indicates that you have a contact allergy to balsam of Peru.

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

Balsam of Peru is the aromatic sap obtained by damaging the bark of a tree found in Central America.

A positive patch test to balsam of Peru often indicates fragrance allergy.

Balsam of Peru has antibacterial and aromatic properties.

Where is balsam of Peru found?

Balsam of Peru is a fragrance and flavoring material and is today seldom used. Many of its components are constituents of fragrances used in perfumes, medicinal creams and ointments, baby powders, and cosmetics. It may also be found in sunscreens, suntan lotions, insect repellents, hair conditioners and shampoos etc.

Balsam of Peru is also used to flavor soft drinks, pastries, cakes, baked goods, ice cream, candy, chocolate, chewing gum, wines, liquors and aperitifs as well as components of peels of citrus fruit and sometimes even tobacco. Eating these products may be cause of sore mouth or even flare up of dermatitis.

Because of its mild bactericidal action, balsam of Peru is sometimes used in medicated cough syrups and lozenges, hemorrhoid suppositories, rectal ointment, tincture of benzoin, foot lotion, wound spray, eyelash pomade, lip medications, calamine lotion, liniment, toothpaste and dental cements.

Balsam of Peru may be found in veterinary preparations.

How to avoid balsam of Peru

To avoid balsam of Peru use only ingredient-labeled cosmetics and medicines that does not list balsam of Peru or any of its components on the label. Notice that balsam of Peru may be listed under a synonym name. A selection of these can be found below.

Prefer fragrance-free cosmetics and avoid “unscented” cosmetics and topical medications since these may contain a masking fragrance. Be especially careful with diaper products and hemorrhoid treatments.

If you are severely allergic, your physician may recommend a special diet. This diet might eliminate the foods to which this allergen is added as a flavoring and the closely related flavors and spices.

If you suspect that you are being exposed to this allergen at work, consult your employer regarding Material Safety Data Sheets.

Inform your healthcare providers that you are allergic to balsam of Peru.

What to look for

Synonyms for balsam of Peru

- Myroxylon pereirae (INCI)
- Balsamum Peruvianum
- China oil
- Peruvian balsam
- Black balsam
- Indian balsam
- Surinam balsam
- Honduras balsam

Components of balsam of Peru and chemically related allergens

- Benzoic alcohol
- Benzyl benzoate and other benzoates
- Benzyl acetate
- Benzoic acid
- Benzyl cinnamate
- Benzaldehyde
- Benzyl salicylate
- Cinnamic acid
- Cinnamyl cinnamate
- Cinnamic alcohol
- Cinnamic aldehyde
- Citrus peel
- Coniferyl alcohols
- Coumarin
- Eugenol
- Farnesol
- Isoeugenol
- Methylcinnamate
- Nerolidol,
- Resinous substances
- Vanillin

Related substances to which you may react

- Cinnamein
- Spices (e.g., Jamaican pepper, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg, paprika, curry, vanilla)
- Tincture of krameria
- Balsam of Copaiba
- Storax (styrax)
- Essence of orange peel
- Benzoin tincture (gum benzoin)
- Colophony
- Balsam of Tolu
- Turpentine
- Propolis
- Wood tars
- Beeswax
- Coumarin
- Diethylstilbestrol

The lists 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.