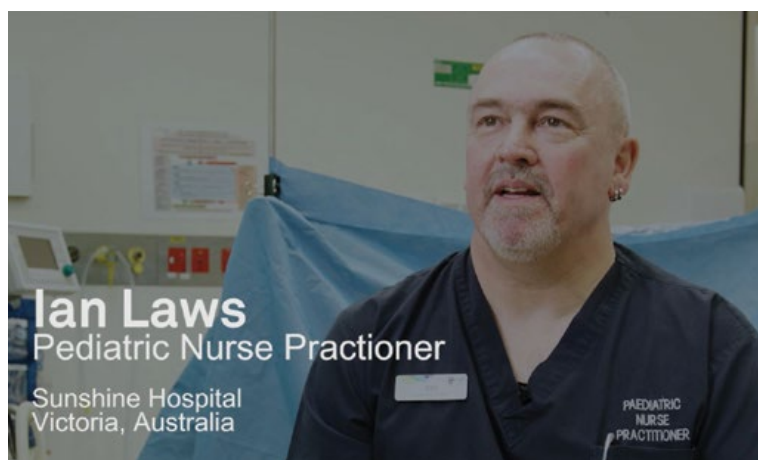


Ansellknow the
DIFFERENCE

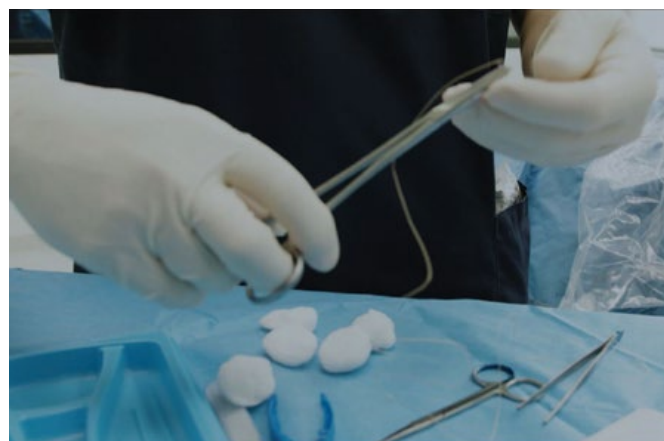
HOW A SEVERE CHEMICAL ALLERGIC REACTION LED TO AN OPERATION



How did this allergy impact your work?

Ian Laws: I developed a glove allergy probably about four years ago. It took a while to diagnose me and find out exactly what I was allergic to because unlike latex Type I allergies which come out almost immediately, the chemical Type IV allergies can be delayed and it didn't automatically come up where I'd put a glove on and then react to it. It might be days later before I'd get some sort of reaction. Eventually, continued use of the gloves meant that my hands continued to swell. I went up almost two sizes in gloves because of the swelling.

The skin was extremely dry around the knuckles and all the joints. The skin would crack and break open so I had continually bleeding hands and cracked skin.



| FACT FILE | |
|-----------|--------------------------------|
| NAME | Ian Laws |
| ROLE | Pediatric Nurse Practitioner |
| HOSPITAL | Sunshine Hospital |
| LOCATION | St Albans, Victoria, Australia |

Ian Laws: I'm a Pediatric Nurse Practitioner at Sunshine Emergency Department Australia.

I've been a Nurse Practitioner for twelve years but I've been a nurse for about twenty-one years and prior to that I was a paramedic.

My role allows me to look after children, mainly children that come in with injuries.

They're in pain, their parents are anxious and to be able to relieve their pain and help the parent's anxiety and be able to send them home with a positive experience of the hospital, rather than a fear ridden, one is really satisfying for me.

How important is glove protection?

Ian Laws: Glove protection is really important in my job, not only to protect me but to protect my patients. I deal with a lot of children with wounds, cuts and burns so I need to glove up to prevent infection.

Any movement of the hands was painful and the itch was incredible. A lot of times I'd put the gloves on before I went to see the patient, to avoid them seeing my hands.

I tended to avoid patients that required wound care or I would maybe do a visual examination of the patient without contact and get a colleague to do dressings and other patient contact; so it affected me in that way.

I went to a dermatologist who said basically, it's just eczema, nothing to do with contact dermatitis, he said. "Here have some steroid creams and go away."

I also had an issue with sterile gloves, it wasn't just the examination gloves. The sterile gloves also affected my hands which meant that even simple sterile procedures like suturing I couldn't do. My hands eventually got so bad at work with the cracked skin that I got an infection to my little finger that was really painful and really sore.

I showed it to one of the plastic surgeons at work who basically decided that I needed to go to theatre immediately and have this incised and drained. They did that in theatre, I was admitted to hospital for three days and then signed off immediately for three weeks.

It was frustrating having that time off work because for all intents and purposes I felt I was still fit to work. Because of the infection I got in my finger and having surgery, I was sent to the Skin and Cancer Foundation for allergy testing.

At the Foundation they put one hundred and twenty skin patches on my back. When I came back for the results, they removed the patches and found I had an extreme reaction to chemical accelerators used in the manufacture of gloves.



What advice would you give to your peers?

Ian Laws: I'd just say to colleagues to be aware of what contact allergy looks like and just because we've moved on from latex, doesn't mean to say you can't get an allergy to gloves or other rubber products. I use Ansell chemical accelerator-free gloves. Since using those, I've had no issues with my hands at all. Now I feel I can get on with my life, get back to normal and do my job as I'm trained to do.

Watch the video of Ian's story. [Click here.](#)

ansell.com/nonlatex