

E-Z-EM Fruit-flavored CT Oral Contrast Agents* are Safe for Latex-Sensitive Patients

Introduction

Latex allergic individuals produce antibodies directed against one or more of the proteins found in natural rubber. Latex contains about 240 proteins, 57 of which are known allergens.

Approximately 30-50% of individuals who are allergic to natural rubber latex show an associated hypersensitivity to some plant-derived foods, especially fresh fruit.¹ This association between latex allergy and allergy to plant-derived foods is called "latex-fruit syndrome".

Considerations

Latex allergy is commonly accompanied by a cross-reactivity to certain fruits.²⁻⁶

Allergen cross-reactivity seems to be due to IgE antibodies that recognize structurally similar epitopes on different proteins. As a consequence of cross-reactivity, individuals may experience hypersensitivity reactions ranging from allergic rhinitis, urticaria, periorbital edema, bronchospasm, laryngospasm or, rarely, anaphylaxis.

Should patients with a latex allergy avoid all cross-reacting foods? In the latex-fruit syndrome, cross-reactivity extends not only to several different fruits, but also to vegetables, pollen and various plants. Any food that causes clinically relevant allergic reactions or anaphylaxis should be avoided. Some patients, however, may display sensitivity to certain foods, as demonstrated by the skin prick test, but experience no symptoms when they consume those foods.

Facts

- The number of adverse events reported for the E-Z-EM line of fruit-flavored Smoothies is less than the reported rate for all other E-Z-EM barium-based CT oral contrast agents.
- Only one product in the E-Z-EM fruit-flavored Smoothie line contains natural fruit flavoring, Banana Smoothie Read-Cat® 2 (0.18% naturally fortified banana flavor.) **No serious adverse events have been reported for this product**, and the number of mild reactions is actually less than the already low rate for the artificially flavored products.

Number of Adverse Reactions per Million Bottles Sold	
E-Z-EM Product**	Combined Data for 2002-2003
All other Read-Cat® formulations (none of which contain banana)	4.1
Apple Smoothie	0
Berry Smoothie	3.2
Banana Smoothie	1.2

Table 1. Data is based on millions of bottles sold during 2002 and 2003 and the corresponding number of adverse reactions reported to E-Z-EM during that period.

Conclusions

- Since approximately 5% of the population in the United States has a sensitivity to latex ^{7,8} and since the Smoothies product does not cite a contraindication to latex allergy, it is safe to assume that thousands of individuals with a sensitivity to latex consumed this product with no reported adverse reactions.
- E-Z-EM fruit-flavored Smoothies have been given to many hundreds of thousands of patients with no reported anaphylactic reactions or serious adverse events.
- According to E-Z-EM data, there is no expected decrease in adverse reactions due to latex-fruit syndrome by switching from Smoothies to any other oral contrast agent, including iodine.

E-Z-EM CT Oral Contrast - *Safety Never Tasted So Good*

* E-Z-EM manufactures and markets a wide range of CT oral contrast products. All products in the range have essentially similar clinical properties, and the decision to choose one over another is based on non-medical criteria such as convenience or taste preference. Not all products manufactured by E-Z-EM are available in all global markets. Brand names used for E-Z-EM CT oral contrast products in various global territories include Smoothie, Read-Cat®, E-Z-Cat®, E-Z-Cat® Dry, and BARICAT®.

** Not all flavors are available in different countries - refer to local E-Z-EM distributor/agent.

References:

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E-Z-EM, INC.

Global Headquarters

1111 Marcus Avenue, Suite LL-26
Lake Success, NY 11042 USA
PHONE: 516-333-8230
TOLL FREE: 1-800-544-4624 (US only)
FAX: 516-302-2919
www.ezem.com

E-Z-EM Ltd.

International Office

Avonbury Business Park
Howes Lane, Bicester
OX26 2UA, United Kingdom
Orderline: 0800 18 17 33 (UK only)
Phone: +44 (0) 1869 366900
Fax: +44 (0) 1869 366999
Email: information@ezem.co.uk

Manufactured by: E-Z-EM, INC. 717 Main Street, Westbury, NY 11590-5021 USA

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