

We have found many people allergic to these chemicals. It is a good idea to avoid them to see if your rash gets better, before attending for testing.

Methylchloroisothiazolinone (MCI) and methylisothiazolinone (MI)

Allergic contact dermatitis can develop at any age and usually persists for many years.

What are methylisothiazolinone and methylchloroisothiazolinone?

Methylisothiazolinone (MI) and methylchloroisothiazolinone (MCI) are preservatives which are used in a wide variety of cosmetics and some industrial products to prevent contamination by germs, particularly bacteria. They are often used in combination or MI may be used alone. We are currently seeing a large number of cases of MI allergy because of its concentration. Hopefully, once appropriate legislation is enacted, rates of allergy will decrease.

Common sources of MI and MCI

Home sources	Industrial/work sources
Baby wipes- less common these days Other moist disposable wipes Shampoos and conditioners Body or face washes Deodorants Moisturisers Liquid hand soaps	House paints (water based) Cutting oils Coolants Cooling tower water Pulp and paper industry Hand cleaners and other cleaning agents Jet fuels Adhesives and glues (a few only)

How do I avoid MI and MCI?

Avoidance is the only long term treatment as you cannot be desensitised to MI or MCI. You need to read the ingredient label on any cosmetic products, or the material safety data sheet for industrial products to see if they contain MI or MCI.

MI in paint

MI is contained in many (water-based) house paints available in Australia. If you are allergic to MI or MCI and are exposed to fresh paint, you may develop a rash on areas of skin that are exposed e.g face. MI may still be released into the air from paint for a few weeks after a room or house has been painted, so you may need to avoid the area for up to 4 weeks. If the ingredients of the paint are not listed on the container, you may need to contact the paint manufacturer to find out if it contains MI or MCI.

Examples of products that may be used (free of MI and MCI):

- Baby wipes: Johnson and Johnson, Curash, Coles, Nature Babycare, Comfy Bots, Gaia Skin naturals, Bambeco
- Facial wipes: Simple, L'Oreal Revitalift
- Shampoos and conditioners: Ego QV hair gentle shampoo and conditioner, Selsun blue shampoo, L'Oreal Elvive, Neutrogena T gel shampoo
- Body or face washes: QV wash, Cetaphil gentle wash, Simple
- Moisturisers: Ego QV moisturisers, Simple

Alternative names

In personal or cosmetic products, MI and MCI are not usually called by any other name.

In industrial products, manufacturers may use alternative (trade) names for MI/MCI such as Kathon, Euxyl K100, Acticide, Algucid CH 50, Amerstat 250, GR 856, Grotan TK2, Metatin GT, Mitco CC, Mx 323 or Parmetol.

Material safety data sheets may show the CAS (chemical) numbers: CAS 2682-20-4 for MI and 26172-55-4 for MCI.

Disclaimer

This information sheet is intended to provide general advice only. If you have any concerns regarding your individual situation, please contact your dermatologist.

Skin Health Institute, 80 Drummond St, Carlton Vic 3053. Ph. 03 9623 9402.