



Create Better  
Outcomes

# National Orthopaedic Hospital Cappagh chooses safer non-latex surgical gloves.

The experiences of **Elaine Gittens**, CNM 3, and **Mark Keogh**, Theatre Supplies Officer, National Orthopaedic Hospital Cappagh (NOHC).



## Factfile

- 136 Hospital Beds
- 6 Surgical Theatres (5 Major & 1 Minor)
- 37 Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeons
- 18 Consultant Anaesthesiologists
- 4 Consultant Radiologists
- 600 Staff
- 7,428 Theatre & Plaster Bay Procedures
- 26,00 Attendees
- Committed to Research & Innovation
- Teaching Hospital since 1921
- 1,000 Students Annually
- €69 Million Turnover

Source: Annual Report 2023

## ELAINE GITTENS, CNM 3, NOHC

### Challenge: Personal and Hospital-Wide

The shift to latex-free gloves at NOHC presented a significant challenge. The primary issue was securing buy-in from a large and diverse group of staff and consultants while ensuring the selected non-latex gloves met the needs of all stakeholders. This was compounded by the time-consuming process of evaluating and choosing the most suitable gloves to replace the existing stock.

### Critical Nature of the Challenge

Anaphylactic reactions can have catastrophic implications for patients and staff. A risk assessment initially focused on vulnerable Cerebral Palsy patients revealed a broader benefit for all theatre patients and staff. Transitioning to latex-free gloves aligned with national guidelines, eliminated latex as a risk factor, streamlined communication, and optimised the operational efficiency of the theatre schedule.

*“Anaphylactic reactions can have catastrophic implications for patients and staff.”*

### Changes and Improvements Made

The process involved selecting a glove preferred by the majority, depleting the existing stock, and implementing a full-scale switch once the new stock became available. The transition ensured consistency and compliance with national safety standards.

### Timeline

The Hospital's evaluation process and transition to latex-free gloves took longer than anticipated, as multiple stakeholders input into the decision for change.

### Stakeholder Involvement

The initiative was led by the CNM team and supported by the multidisciplinary team (MDT). It reflected a collective effort to enhance patient and staff safety. PEI's support was invaluable to the process.



## Results

**Patient Safety and Equity:** The use of latex-free gloves ensures uniform safety standards for all patients, eliminating the need for customised precautions or scheduling delays for latex-sensitive cases.

**Staff Benefits:** The transition promises long-term improvements in staff skin conditions.

**Operational Efficiency:** The theatres no longer face disruptions due to latex-related constraints.

## Collaboration with PEI

The collaboration with PEI was a cornerstone of this success. Their educational and training support facilitated staff engagement and understanding. The glove selection process was thorough, with PEI providing various options and assisting with the seamless swap-out and phasing down of old stock.

*"The collaboration with PEI was a cornerstone of this success. Their educational and training support facilitated staff engagement and understanding."*

## MARK KEOGH, THEATRE SUPPLIES OFFICER, NOHC

### What challenges did you face with stock management before starting the Latex Free conversion?

Space is a major challenge in my theatre stores, especially when managing a variety of SKUs. Proper stock rotation is essential to prevent items from expiring on the shelf. Since Non-Latex gloves were used less frequently than Latex gloves, there was a risk of stock expiring, particularly in less commonly used sizes like 5.5 and 9.

### What were the main steps involved in the project from your perspective?

The theatre tested various glove styles from both PEI and other suppliers. The comfort and quality of the Gammex P.I. Kare range made it easy to transition existing Latex users to the Gammex Non-Latex P.I. Textured gloves. As more staff adopted the Gammex gloves, we aimed for a full conversion to this style. However, we also accommodated surgeons who preferred alternative styles of Non-Latex gloves.

*"The comfort and quality of the Gammex P.I. Kare range made it easy to transition existing Latex users."*

### How has the project impacted daily operations in the hospital stores?

By going latex free we have reduced the amount of glove types on the shelf helping with space and meaning less stock for me to reorder and manage. We have reduced the SKU's of Gammex gloves from 22 to 11, freeing up shelf space for other new products' that are constantly being introduced. We recently upgraded our storage facilities to create more space in the theatre stores. This shows how badly we were crying out for space. The Gammex boxes themselves are very compact and I can fit more on the shelf than I could have with other brands.

### What if any feedback have you received from colleagues about the changes?

The Warehouse are now holding fewer styles of gloves. This allows them to order less frequently and manage their stock better. PEI have next day delivery and same day if the stock is urgent. This takes the pressure off and gives us one less thing to worry about. Theatre staff no longer need to worry about the latex free trolley and the stock management that comes with that. Every theatre is now latex free so all patients with allergies to latex are treated the same as other patients now.

*"The Warehouse are now holding fewer styles of gloves. This allows them to order less frequently and manage their stock better.."*

The above questions and answers relate specifically to the NOHC's transition from latex to non-latex gloves during 2024. For further information please contact [or@pei.ie](mailto:or@pei.ie).

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