

# CLINICAL ALERT

Quality and  
Safety

## Risk of anaphylactic reaction due to chlorhexidine allergy

21<sup>st</sup> November 2012

Alert No: 9

Following serious incidents arising from severe anaphylactic reactions as a result of chlorhexidine allergy, the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) have issued a safety alert in relation to all devices and medicinal products containing **chlorhexidine**.

Chlorhexidine is a chemical anti-septic found in a number of commonly used products such as:



Skin wipes



Surface wipes



Cleansing spray



Soap (hibiscrub)



And a range of mouth care products

### ACTION:

All staff are asked to:

- Be aware of the potential for an anaphylactic reaction to chlorhexidine.
- Ensure that known allergies are recorded in patient notes.
- Check the labels and instructions for use to establish if products contain chlorhexidine prior to use on patients with a known allergy.
- If a patient experiences an unexplained reaction, check whether chlorhexidine was used or was impregnated in a medical device that was used.
- Report allergic reactions to products containing chlorhexidine to the MHRA.
- Refresh their knowledge of the recognition and management of anaphylaxis using the brief e-learning package accessed via this [link](#)

Further guidance on anaphylaxis is available from NICE, the Resuscitation Council and the AAGBI.

For further guidance on products that contain chlorhexidine, please contact your pharmacy team.