Coconut diethanolamide allergy

What is coconut diethanolamide and where is it found?

Coconut diethanolamide is a widely used surface active agent which helps to stabilise the foam in hand gels, hand-washing liquids, shampoos and dish-washing liquids. It is manufactured from coconut oil and is a non-ionic surfactant.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Products which may contain coconut diethanolamide</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• All purpose cleaners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Barrier creams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Bath products</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cooling fluids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Cosmetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Dish washing detergents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Disinfectants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hand soaps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hand washing liquids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hydraulic mining oil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Industrial cleaners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Laundry detergents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Metalworking fluids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sanitizers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Shampoo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Potential occupational exposures

• Machine operators
• Food preparations occupations
• Janitors and maids
• Sheet metal workers
• Health aids
• Heating, air and refrigeration mechanics.

What are the reactions to coconut diethanolamide allergy?

Coconut diethanolamide can rarely cause contact allergic dermatitis, particularly on the hands. Leave-on products (hand-protection foams) cause sensitisation much more rapidly (2–3 months) than rinse-off products (hand-washing liquids; 5–7 years).

Am I allergic to coconut diethanolamide?

Coconut diethanolamide contact allergy is diagnosed by a positive patch test to coconut diethanolamide.

Treatment of contact dermatitis due to coconut diethanolamide exposure

If you are diagnosed with coconut diethanolamide allergy then avoid products which contain this. Read product
labels. It may take 2–3 weeks of avoiding exposure before improvement in the dermatitis occurs.

Standard treatment is used for the dermatitis i.e. topical corticosteroids and emollients.

### Alternative names for coconut diethanolamide

- Coconut diethanolamine
- Coconut oil diethanolamine
- Coconut oil acid
- Cocamide DEA
- Ninol
- Witcamide
- Calamide

*Draft 16 May 2008*

### Related information

#### References:
- Coconut diethanolamide. Trey Truett MD. [www.dermacom.ch/private/alindex/CO004.htm](http://www.dermacom.ch/private/alindex/CO004.htm)

#### On DermNet NZ:
- [Dermatitis / eczema](http://dermnetnz.org/dermatitis/eczema.html)
- [Eczema, dermatitis and allergies](http://dermnetnz.org/dermatitis/allergies.html)

#### Other websites:
- [Contact Allergen Database](http://www.allergen-database.org)

#### Books about skin diseases:
See the [DermNet NZ bookstore](http://dermnetnz.org/dermatitis/books.html)

**Author:** Dr Mark Duffill, Dermatologist, Hamilton, NZ

---

DermNet does not provide an on-line consultation service. If you have any concerns with your skin or its treatment, see a dermatologist for advice.