

# *Skin contact reactions to spices. A review.*

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## S U M M A R Y

Spices and food ingredients relatively often trigger skin reactions of delayed or immediate type. Both professionals, like chefs, catterers, as well as general population may be affected. Clove, Jamaica pepper, garlic, paprika, vanilla and other spices are frequent causes of delayed type, while mustard, coriander, careway, celery are the most common causes of the immediate type skin allergy. The above mentioned problems are reviewed in details.

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### *1. Introduction*

Skin is the most frequently affected organ of systemic IgE-mediated allergy to foods (1,2). However, contact with food may cause a localized "contact" reaction, either at the direct site of skin contact or upon contact with the lips and oral mucosa (oral allergy syndrome), or a more generalized skin reaction (systemic contact dermatitis). Skin contact reactions to foods and spices may occur in both the workplace and at home. It is well known that chefs, caterers, farmers, food handlers and preparers are occupationally exposed to foods and spices (F&S), but the list of jobs in which exposure to F&S allergens may occur is extensive. Spices are also used in cosmetics, perfumes, and medicaments, and allergic contact dermatitis may be caused by these products (1). Contact dermatitis to vanilla was recognized

more than a century ago (1), and since then, numerous reports on skin reactions from F&S have been published (1,2). Skin contacts with F&S may result in irritant contact dermatitis, allergic contact dermatitis (ACD), contact urticaria (CU), protein contact dermatitis (PCD), chemical photosensitivity (phototoxic and photoallergic reactions), and systemic ACD. These reactions can result from contact with a natural food or spice, and food additives such as preservatives, flavorings, stabilizers, emulsifying agents, enzymes and antioxidants, respectively.

Often a combination of factors will contribute to skin contact reactions. An individual with hand dermatitis who works as a chef may have both irritant contact dermatitis from wet work and frequent hand washing, and ACD caused by garlic or onion, as well as a *Candida* (3) or protein contact paronychia (4). The most common

## K E Y W O R D S

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