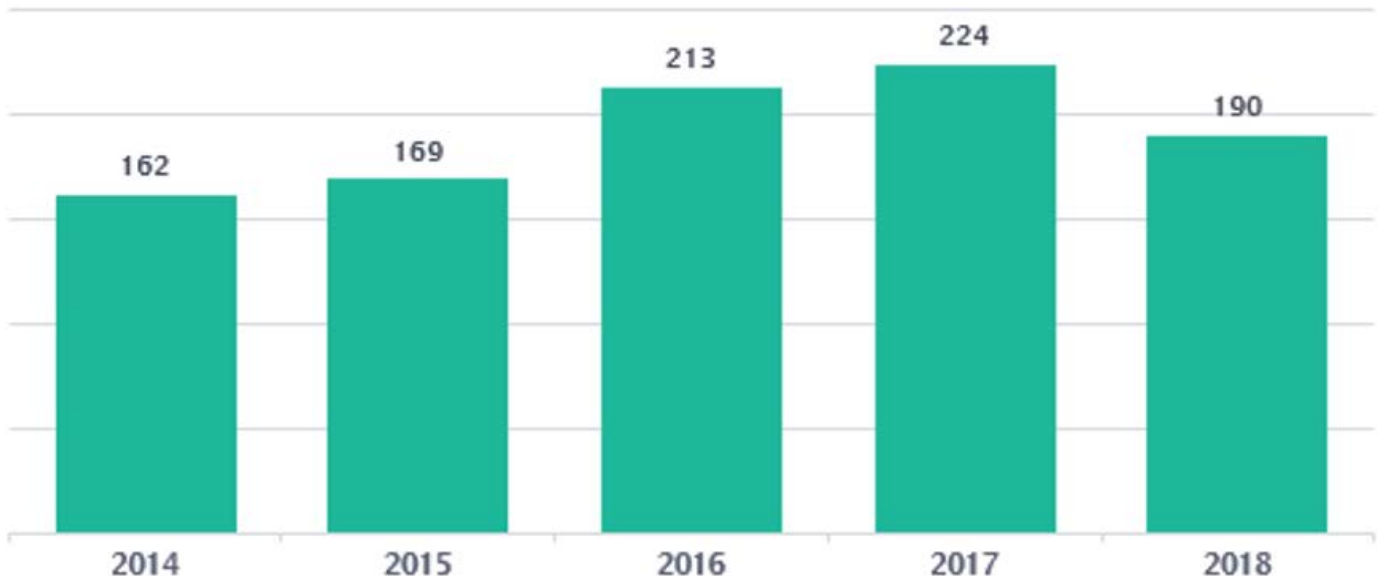


Patient Safety Alert

May 20, 2019

Breaches in Latex Precautions Reported to PA-PSRS per Year



Latex Still Posing Serious Risk to Patients: Your Facility is Not as “Latex-Free” as You Think

While many hospitals are striving to be “latex-free,” guaranteeing there are no latex products is difficult. Did you know the following products contain latex?

- Indwelling urinary catheters (accounted for greater than 75% of inadvertent exposures reported to PA-PSRS in the last five years)
- Red rubber catheters
- Penrose Drains

Allergic reactions to latex can range in severity from itchiness to immediate anaphylaxis, and the severity of past reactions does not predict future ones.

Take the following precautions to be safe:

- Ask patients explicitly, **are you allergic to latex?**
Key times to stop and ask:
 - In the Emergency Department and upon admission
 - Before surgery
 - Before bedside procedures, such as urinary catheter insertion
- When caring for patients with latex allergies, **read all product labels to check for latex.** Key risks to be aware of:
 - Items packaged in kits
 - Misstocked items
 - Unexpected product substitutions

- **Communicate** the patient’s latex allergy to other members of the care team.
Key times to speak up:
 - When new staff arrive at the bedside to perform procedures
 - When new staff enter the operating room to assist or cover breaks
 - When sending a patient off the unit for a procedure, test, or transfer

For more information, check out our March 2018 *Advisory*, “Latex: A Lingering and Lurking Safety Risk”:
http://patientsafety.pa.gov/ADVISORIES/Pages/201803_LatexUpdate.aspx



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