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**Biological evaluation of medical  
devices —**

Part 10:  
**Tests for skin sensitization**

*Évaluation biologique des dispositifs médicaux —  
Partie 10: Essais de sensibilisation cutanée*



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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 194 *Biological and clinical evaluation of medical devices*, in collaboration with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committee CEN/TC 206, *Biological and clinical evaluation of medical devices*, in accordance with the Agreement on technical cooperation between ISO and CEN (Vienna Agreement).

This fourth edition cancels and replaces the third edition (ISO 10993-10:2010), which has been technically revised.

The main changes compared to the previous edition are as follows:

- this document now contains a description of skin sensitization testing only;
- [Annex C](#) on non-animal methods for skin sensitization (formerly [Annex D](#)) has been updated;
- the testing for irritation is now described in ISO 10993-23.

A list of all parts in the ISO 10993 series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

This document assesses possible contact hazards from chemicals released from medical devices, which may produce skin sensitization.

Some materials that are included in medical devices have been tested, and their skin sensitization potential has been documented. Especially for dental materials, sensitizing properties were reported—see Reference [51]. Other materials and their chemical components have not been tested and may induce adverse effects when in contact with human tissue. The manufacturer is thus obliged to evaluate each device for potential adverse effects prior to marketing.

Traditionally, small animal tests are performed prior to testing on humans to help predict human response (background information is provided in [Annex D](#)). Since 2015, several in chemico and in vitro assays have been validated and Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) test guidelines released to assess the skin sensitization potential of chemicals.<sup>[75][79][104]</sup> An overview of available alternative skin sensitization tests for neat chemicals is given in [Annex C](#). These test methods, each developed to address a specific key event, can possibly not be sufficient alone to conclude on the presence or absence of skin sensitization potential of chemicals and should be considered in the context of integrated approaches such as integrated approaches to testing and assessment (IATA), combining them with other complementary information. Note that the in vitro and in chemico tests for skin sensitization in [Annex C](#) have thus far been validated only for neat chemicals and not for medical devices. To confirm that they are applicable for evaluation of the skin sensitization potential of medical devices, their assays need to be assessed and validated.

Where appropriate, the preliminary use of in vitro methods is encouraged for screening purposes prior to animal testing. To reduce the number of animals used, this document presents a step-wise approach, with review and analysis of test results at each stage. It is intended that, for regulatory submission, skin sensitization studies be conducted using GLP or ISO/IEC 17025 as applicable to the respective country and comply with regulations related to animal welfare. Statistical analyses of data are recommended and used whenever appropriate. This document includes important tools for the development of safe products and is intended for use by professionals, appropriately qualified by training and experience, who can interpret its requirements and judge the outcomes of the evaluation for each medical device, taking into consideration all the factors relevant to the device, its intended use and the current knowledge of the medical device provided by review of the scientific literature and previous clinical experience.

This document is based on numerous standards and guidelines, including OECD Guidelines, US Pharmacopoeia and the European Pharmacopoeia. It is intended to be the basic document for the selection and conduct of tests enabling the evaluation of dermal sensitization responses relevant to the safety of medical materials and devices.

# Biological evaluation of medical devices —

## Part 10: Tests for skin sensitization

### 1 Scope

This document specifies the procedure for the assessment of medical devices and their constituent materials with regard to their potential to induce skin sensitization.

This document includes:

- details of in vivo skin sensitization test procedures;
- key factors for the interpretation of the results.

NOTE Instructions for the preparation of materials specifically in relation to the above tests are given in [Annex A](#).

### 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 10993-1, *Biological evaluation of medical devices — Part 1: Evaluation and testing within a risk management process*

ISO 10993-2, *Biological evaluation of medical devices — Part 2: Animal welfare requirements*

ISO 10993-12, *Biological evaluation of medical devices — Part 12: Sample preparation and reference materials*

ISO 10993-18, *Biological evaluation of medical devices — Part 18: Chemical characterization of medical device materials within a risk management process*

### 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 10993-1 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

#### 3.1

**allergen**  
sensitizer

substance or material that is capable of inducing a specific hypersensitivity reaction upon repeated contact with that substance or material