

A Review of Synthetic Lattices in Surgical Glove Use

Bert Krutzer, Marianne Ros, Joris Smit and Wouter de Jong
Kraton Innovation Center, Amsterdam

Kraton Performance Polymers, Inc. conducted a comparative study on commercially available surgical gloves made of the commonly used base materials: natural rubber latex (NRL), chloroprene latex (CRL), Ziegler-Natta IR Latex, and Cariflex® IR Latex. This study showed that Cariflex IR Latex is the material of choice to produce high quality surgical gloves.

The complete study can be obtained by visiting www.Kraton.com and clicking on the Cariflex Polyisoprene link. An excerpt from the paper follows below:

Abstract

The majority of commercial surgical gloves are still manufactured from natural rubber latex (NRL). However, NRL can lead to Type I allergic reactions, including risk of anaphylactic shock. In the race to reduce patient and medical staff allergy risks, a growing number of hospitals aim to eliminate products made from NRL, including surgical gloves. Drawbacks of NRL, including odor, and adverse allergic (Type I) reactions, led to the development of synthetic alternatives. Examples of the alternative synthetic materials used today in surgical gloves include polychloroprene latex (CRL) and polyisoprene latex (IRL). However, replacement of NRL surgical gloves by synthetic alternatives has caused in the past some concerns regarding comfort and protection. Today, as high quality polyisoprene products made of Cariflex IR Latex are increasingly used in the health care world, such concerns are disappearing.

To further highlight and support this trend, we evaluated the mechanical properties of commercially available surgical gloves in the following areas: tensile strength, modulus, and puncture resistance. Based on the observations we infer that surgical gloves based on Cariflex IR Latex offer mechanical protection comparable to NRL gloves. Further, Cariflex IRL-based surgical gloves are better than other synthetics in terms of comfort and equal, or even superior, to NRL gloves.

Cariflex Polyisoprene Products

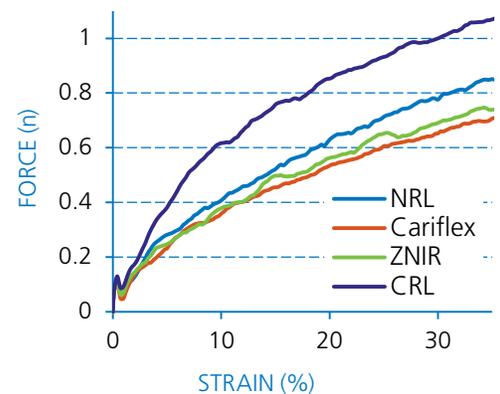
There are currently two types of synthetic polyisoprene. The most widely used industrial process to produce high-cis polyisoprene is Ziegler-Natta (ZN) polymerization; this process can yield synthetic polyisoprene with cis content above 96%. The alternative is anionic polymerization, which leads to cis content above 90%. The latter process is uniquely employed by Kraton in its Belpre, Ohio facility and branded under the name Cariflex Polyisoprene Products. A unique feature of Cariflex IR is its extreme purity and consistently high quality, which greatly simplifies manufacturing and quality control.

Summary and Conclusion

Twelve different gloves from a range of suppliers were evaluated with respect to their mechanical behavior. It was shown that all gloves met the ASTM standard for surgical gloves and offered mechanical protection comparable to NRL gloves. However, surgical gloves based on Cariflex IR Latex were demonstrated to be better than other synthetic gloves in terms of comfort and equal, or even superior, to NRL gloves.



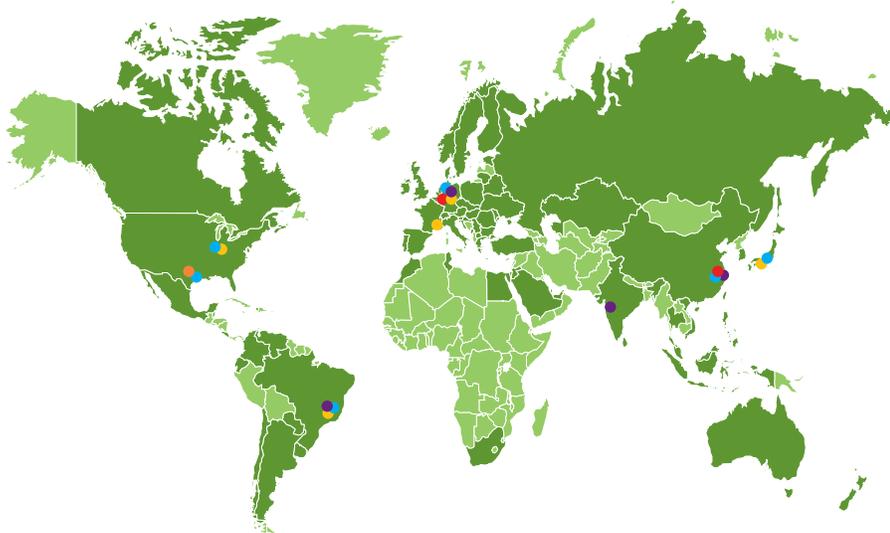
FIGURE 1



The graph shows typical force-strain curves for NRL, Cariflex IR, ZnIR and CR Latex gloves. The low stress level of the Cariflex IR Latex gloves indicate that this material will feel the softest, and provide the most comfort, which is important in surgical gloves.

Company Profile

Kraton Performance Polymers, Inc. is a leading global producer of engineered polymers used to enhance the performance of products that touch virtually every aspect of our lives. The original inventor of styrenic block copolymer (SBC) chemistry in the 1960s, Kraton has a history of innovation dating back more than 50 years. Used in a myriad of applications, Kraton adds utility, value and customer appeal to products ranging from adhesives and coatings, paving and roofing to personal care items, medical supplies, electronic and automotive components. Kraton offers its products to a diverse group of more than 800 customers in over 60 countries worldwide. Dedicated to “Giving Innovators Their Edge,” we also collaborate with manufacturers on custom solutions to specific needs.



Global Distribution

- Global Headquarters
- Innovation Center
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Corporate Headquarters

15710 John F. Kennedy Blvd.
Suite 300
Houston, Texas 77032
+1-800-4-KRATON (572866)

Asia Pacific

Shanghai World Financial Center
Room 40T12, 100 Century
Avenue, Pudong New Area,
Post Code 200120
Shanghai, PRC
+86 21 2082 3888

Europe/Middle East/Africa

John M. Keynesplein 10
NL – 1066 EP Amsterdam
The Netherlands
+31 (0)20 201 7697

India/South East Asia

Suite 60, Vatika Business Centre,
7th Floor, B wing, Supreme
Business Park, Hiranandani
Estate, Powai, Mumbai 400076
India
+91 22 4238 9290

South America

Av. Roberto Simonsem, 1500
13140-000 - Paulinia – SP,
Brazil
+55 19 3874 7270

For more information, please visit our website at www.kraton.com or email info@kraton.com.

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