

# Wood Allergies, Toxicity and Health Issues

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# Health Hazards

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- Noise
- Vibration
- Chemical hazards
- Wood dust



# Allergic Reactions

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The majority of wood species have been reported to cause some level of allergic irritation or reaction in **sensitive individuals**



# Irritants (Most Common)

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- Includes dust and small particles of wood from wood turning, sanding and cutting with all saws
- Can cause irritation of the skin and eyes with itching and redness
- Can cause systemic irritation of the lungs with coughing, sneezing and even asthma like symptoms



# Sensitizers

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- Substances that sensitize the body causing symptoms of allergic reaction from repeated exposure
- First exposure introduces the antigen (or allergen) to which the body responds by producing antibodies
- Each additional exposure to the sensitizer produces a more severe reaction

# Toxins

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- Very few woods are actually toxic in and of themselves
- Majority are allergenic to susceptible individuals
- As far back as 77AD the Romans thought the yew was toxic

# Carcinogens

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- Chronic exposure to any dust of micro small particles, usually in commercial or industrial work, can cause cancer of the respiratory system, in the nasal pharyngeal passages and lungs
- The importance of dust collection systems can not be over emphasized to reduce the chance of respiratory problems and cancer



# Suggestions

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- If you are a person that is sensitive to a specific wood, it is like being allergic to peanuts, probably best you not use that particular wood
- By wearing protective clothing, ventilation masks, and ventilation hood, you could decrease your risk of a reaction
- If you are one of the unlucky ones, Don't eat the Peanuts!

