Blackberry vs. iPhone: The Healthy Option

The Blackberry vs. iPhone battle has been ongoing since Apple's 2007 phone debut. According to a study being presented at the Annual Scientific Meeting of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI), there is a clear winner when it comes to your health. With more than 285 million cell phone subscribers in the United States, ACAAI allergists studied popular smartphones for two common allergens, cobalt and nickel.

"Approximately one-third of all Blackberries contain nickel, but neither cobalt nor nickel was detected in iPhones or Droids," said allergist Tania Mucci, M.D., lead study author and ACAAI member. "Both metals can cause an allergic reaction including dry, itchy patches along the cheek bones, jaw line and ears." The less popular flip phone models also revealed levels of cobalt and nickel. Roughly 91 percent contained nickel and 52 percent tested positive for cobalt. These metals are commonly used in items such as jewelry, coins and even makeup. Nickel is one of the most common contact allergens, affecting 17 percent of women and three percent of men.

"Patients with nickel and cobalt allergies should consider using iPhones or Droids to reduce the chance of having an allergic reaction," said allergist Luz Fonacier, M.D., study author and ACAAI fellow. "Blackberry users with known allergies should avoid prolonged conversations, text messaging and handling their phones if they begin noticing symptoms."

Symptoms of nickel and cobalt allergies can include redness, swelling, itching, eczema, blistering, skin lesions and occasional scarring. For sufferers that are glued to their phones, ACAAI advises opting for plastic phone cases, wireless ear pieces and clear film screens to decrease allergic reactions.

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