

Patch Testing

Patient Information

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What is patch testing ?

The aim of patch testing is to try to discover whether you are allergic to something that is coming into contact with your skin.



Are there limitations to patch testing?

Patch tests are only helpful to investigate allergies which are due to direct skin contact with substances outside the body. It does not detect allergies related to diet or anything which is inhaled and may result in sneezing, asthma or urticaria.

Preparation for testing

Please let us know, if you are taking any medication. You should try to avoid corticosteroid for 2 weeks prior to the first appointment of your patch test. Topical corticosteroid cream should not be applied to the back for a week prior to patch testing.

Patch tests are not advisable if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. They can be performed after you have had your baby and finished breastfeeding.

Do not get your back exposed to sunlight for 5 days prior to testing. It is suggested that sunlight before testing may reduce the immune response in the skin.

Patch test procedure

You will have to attend the hospital for three visits within one week. It is important that you attend all three appointments. The patch tests consist of hypoallergenic tape. On each strip are 10 small Finn chambers, each of which contains a different test preparation.

First visit : The patches are applied to the back, which is a flat area; therefore the patches usually stick well. The patches stay in place for the next 48 hours. (If you have an allergy this



will show up on the back, even if the rash is elsewhere on your body.)

Second visit :

The patches are removed and then marked with skin marker and a first reading is made.



Third visit : The final reading takes place. The doctor will discuss the results with you and give you information.



It is helpful if you can bring with you anything that you suspect you may be allergic to or which aggravates your rash.

Things you might bring include.

- Products used on your skin (bring it in its original container), even if you don't think it is causing any problems e.g. moisturizers, lotions , cleanser etc.
- Gloves if you have hand dermatitis, or shoes and socks if your feet are affected.
- Work sample (either bring them in their container if not too big, or put a small sample amount into individual screw top glass containers and label well.
- Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for all products and chemicals you come into contact with in the workplace.

During testing

You cannot get your back wet from the time the patches go on until the time you see the doctor for your third visit. You need to keep your back completely dry.

Sweating must be avoided, as patches could sometimes fall off. So if you are working in a job where you get hot and sweaty, please be careful.

Physical activity or playing sports during testing is also strongly discouraged.

Do not scratch, if the itching is severe, the patch tests may be removed. You will need to note the chamber number which you think has caused the reaction.

If a corner or edge of one of the patches becomes loose, please tape it back with Micropore hypoallergenic tape.

