

Allergy Patch Testing

What is an allergy patch test?

Allergy patch testing is a diagnostic tool used to test and diagnose people with allergic contact dermatitis.

Patch testing consists of numerous different metals and chemicals being placed on your back and secured with tape, for 48 hours (two days). The patches are removed after 48 hours when your allergist will look for signs of a skin reaction on your back. The allergist will then reassess the skin on your back within 72 to 96 hours (about 4 days after the patch was first applied).

- You will have the patch applied to your back on day one. You must leave it in place for 48 hours
- You will return to the clinic after 48 hours for a skin assessment
- You will be asked to return, in another one to two days, to have the area reassessed.

Why do I need an allergy patch test?

Not everyone needs a patch test, however individuals who experience contact reactions, or who have been referred by a dermatologist for this procedure, may find patch testing useful in determining which chemicals or metals they may react to.

Are there any risks associated with an allergy patch test?

Although minimal, the risks associated with patch testing include skin irritation and redness at the site where the patch was applied. Skin reactions to the applied tape have also been reported.

What are the instructions for patch testing?

- Please do not use any moisturizers or creams on your back before your patch testing appointment
- Let the care team know if you are taking prednisone or any other steroids by mouth
- We will apply tape to your back. **If you have hair on your back the patches cannot be applied.** You MUST shave this area prior to your appointment, which should be done at least several days before.
- After the patch test, you will notice markings that were put on your skin with a purple marker. These markings may rub off. Consider wearing an old t-shirt or darker coloured shirt that won't stain
- Do not shower when the patch is on. Sponge bathing is permitted, but please do not get the tape wet
- Do not engage in any strenuous exercise as this will cause you to sweat, risking the tape peeling

- Try to leave the patch and tape on for the full amount of time. If you must remove it, take note of which areas tested positive by marking the area(s) of concern with a permanent marker
- You may take an antihistamine such as Reactine, Claritin, Aleris or Benadryl
- After the patches have been removed, you may want to consider using a dark towel when drying up, due to purple markings that may still be on your skin

If you have any questions, please contact the clinic at: 519 646-6100 ext. 61353.