

What is a skin allergy test?

Respiratory

Introduction

This leaflet has been written to provide information about skin allergy testing. We hope it answers some of the questions or concerns you may have. It is not intended to replace talking to a healthcare professional.

Why have I been sent for this test?

Your consultant or specialist nurse has requested this test to help him/her diagnose and treat the symptoms allergies can cause. Some of these symptoms might include a runny nose, itchy eyes, skin rash and sneezing. The test can help diagnose asthma, allergic rhinitis (or hay fever) and eczema.

What allergens do you test for?

We test for the most common airborne allergens. This includes pet hair, house dust mites, moulds, fungi and spores plus tree and grass pollens. We cannot test for every allergen during a skin prick test, if we do not have the specific allergen then it maybe necessary for you to have a blood "allergy" test instead.

How long will the test take?

You will be in the department for approximately 30 minutes. The procedure will take no longer than 10 minutes. The results will be available after 15 to 20 minutes. You will be required to stay in the testing room during this time with a member of staff.

Are there any risks?

There is a slight chance you may become wheezy up to 24 hours after the test. If you take any inhalers, keep them with you for 24 hours after the procedure as a precaution.

Do I need to do anything prior to my skin allergy test?

You must not use any anti-histamines for 3 days (72 hours) prior to the test. Histamine is the bodies natural response to allergies. Anti-histamines block this reaction, therefore the test will be invalid. If you have administered these drugs you will be turned away and the test will be re-booked.

The prevention of infection is a major priority in all healthcare and everyone has a part to play.

- Please decontaminate your hands frequently for 20 seconds using soap and water or alcohol gel if available
- If you have symptoms of diarrhoea and/or vomiting, cough or other respiratory symptoms, a temperature or any loss of taste or smell please do not visit the hospital or any other care facility and seek advice from 111
- Keep the environment clean and tidy
- Let's work together to keep infections out of our hospitals and care homes.

How is a skin prick test performed?

The skin prick test is generally performed on the forearm. A grid is drawn on the skin with a pen, to indicate the individual test sites. A drop of allergen solution is placed into each section.



A sterile lancet is used to gently prick the surface of the skin through the liquid allergen using light pressure. This allows the allergen to penetrate the outer layer of skin and may initiate an allergic response. A fresh lancet is used for each individual allergen.



As well as testing for allergens, two of the grids or squares will be used for what we term positive and negative controls. The positive control checks that your immune response to an allergen is seen and not "dampened by the use of any anti-histamines", the negative control is used to identify skin that is sensitive to being "scratched or pricked". Both of these controls are used to confirm that the test is accurate.

When each allergen has been pricked, the liquid allergens will all be removed from your arm using a tissue. You will then be asked to remain with a member of staff for 15 to 20 minutes.

Does the test hurt?

No, you will feel a slight scratch when the top layer of skin is pricked. It should not be painful. You may feel some itching and discomfort if you have an allergic reaction to any of the allergens. This will not last long.

When will I know my results?

You will be aware of your results during the test.

When the allergen comes into contact with the skin, it may initiate a local allergic reaction. An allergic reaction triggers the body to release histamine, which will cause a local reaction. This may result in a red, itchy, swollen lump, called a wheal. The physiologist will measure the size of the wheal and use this to assess the severity of the reaction.

The results of this test along with your clinical history will be used by the consultant to interpret your results. It is important to note that a positive skin allergy test does not necessarily mean that you are definitely allergic and a negative result does not fully exclude allergy as a cause for your symptoms.

What happens now?

The physiologist will produce a report of the results. This will be sent to the doctor that referred you for the test, to be acted upon at your next clinic appointment.

What should I do if I no longer wish to have the skin allergy test?

Please contact the department as soon as possible so that the appointment slot can be allocated to another patient.

I have more questions that are not answered in this leaflet?

If you have any problems or questions please do not hesitate to contact The Respiratory Centre on 01902 695061 and speak to a member of the Respiratory Physiology team.

The Respiratory Centre (B1)

New Cross Hospital
Wolverhampton Road
Wolverhampton
WV10 0QP

Monday to Friday 08:30 until 17:00

English

If you need information in another way like easy read or a different language please let us know.

If you need an interpreter or assistance please let us know.

Lithuanian

Jeigu norėtumėte, kad informacija jums būtų pateikta kitu būdu, pavyzdžiui, supaprastinta forma ar kita kalba, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Jeigu jums reikia vertėjo ar kitos pagalbos, prašome mums apie tai pranešti.

Polish

Jeżeli chcieliby Państwo otrzymać te informacje w innej postaci, na przykład w wersji łatwej do czytania lub w innym języku, prosimy powiedzieć nam o tym.

Prosimy poinformować nas również, jeżeli potrzebowaliby Państwo usługi tłumaczenia ustnego lub innej pomocy.

Punjabi

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਵਿਚ ਆਸਾਨ ਰੂਪ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਦੂਜੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਚ, ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਨੂੰ ਦੁਭਾਸ਼ੀਏ ਦੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੱਸੋ।

Romanian

Dacă aveți nevoie de informații în alt format, ca de exemplu caractere ușor de citit sau altă limbă, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Dacă aveți nevoie de un interpret sau de asistență, vă rugăm să ne informați.

Traditional Chinese

如果您需要以其他方式了解信息，如易读或其他语种，请告诉我们。

如果您需要口译人员或帮助，请告诉我们。