

TEXAS REGIONAL ASTHMA AND ALLERGY CENTER, L.L.P.

Board Certified specialists in allergy, asthma, immunology, and respiratory disorders

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Skin Patch Testing Patient Information

Your doctor has recommended you have skin patch testing to help diagnose your current skin condition. Patch testing differs from traditional skin testing in that the allergens placed on your back must remain on for 48 hours. The reason is that the type of allergy your physician is suspicious of is delayed hypersensitivity. Your test will be the North American Series, which includes 72 of the most common contact allergens recommended by the North American Contact Dermatitis group, an expert panel of specialists in contact allergy. It is important to note that most contact skin rashes are of an irritant nature and not the result of an allergy. Negative results help your physician reconfirm that the probability of an allergic cause of your rash is low. It is important that you follow the tips below to help your patch testing proceed as smoothly as possible.

1. If your appointment is later in the day, please call your doctor's nurse 30 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment to confirm your arrival. The doctor's nurse can begin preparing your patch test at that time, saving time once you arrive. This can take about 20-30 minutes.
2. A failure to arrive to your scheduled appointment will result in a charge of \$100 for the patch test.
3. You must not allow your back to get wet or sweaty.
4. No tanning on your back for 2 weeks prior to or during the patch test.
5. No oral or topical steroids for 2 weeks prior to or during the patch test.
6. Let us know if you are pregnant or breast feeding.
7. Gentlemen with generous hair on their backs will need to shave a large portion in order for the patch test material to stick. This should be done no sooner than 72 hours prior to placement of the patch test. Please consult a nurse if you have any questions.
8. Do NOT wipe off the numbers or marks on your back. These are needed in order to read your test at 48 and 72 hours. If the marks are wiped off, we will not be able to interpret the test.
9. Please note that when you arrive in the morning, it will take about 30 minutes for the nurse to prepare the allergens on the patch test chambers.
10. Your initial reading must occur at 48 hours usually on Wednesday. The patches will be removed and 30 minutes later your test will be read and interpreted.
11. Please note it is COMMON for patients to have itching on certain areas where the allergens are placed.
12. Your final reading will occur at 72 hours. In some cases your doctor may request that you come in for a reading at 96 hours. At that point the physician will review your test and provide you with information on avoidance of any allergens that were noted to be positive. Your doctor will then instruct you to correlate your test findings with your exposure at home and work.