

## 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 for this is that the type of allergy that your physician is suspicious of is known as a Type 4 or delayed contact allergy. This is different from what is known as a Type 1 or immediate hypersensitivity, that one sees in patients with pollen allergy. Your test will consist of approximately 65 allergens. These are the most common contact allergens known as the North American Series. Testing to these 65 allergens is based on the recommendations by the North American Contact dermatitis Group, an expert panel of specialist in contact allergy. It is important to note that most contact skin rashes are of an irritant nature not an allergic nature, hence anywhere from 20 up to 60% of patients that are patch tested may have negative results. 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 below tips in order to help your patch testing go as smoothly as possible.

1. You must not allow your back to get wet or sweaty.
2. No tanning on your back for 2 weeks prior to or during the patch test.
3. No oral or topical steroids for 2 weeks prior to or during the patch testing.
4. Let us know if you are pregnant or breast feeding.
5. 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 the nurse if you have any questions.
6. Do NOT wipe off the numbers or marks on your back in order for us to place the reading templates at 48 and 72 hours. If they wipe off the test we will not be able to interpret the test.
7. Please note when you arrive on Monday, it takes around 309 minutes for the nurse to load the allergens in the chamber in order to place them on your back.
8. Your initial reading must occur at 48 hours on Wednesday. The patches will be removed and read after the back is allowed to settle for 30 minutes. Please note that once they are removed you still MUST NOT allow your back to get wet or sweaty, and DO NOT remove the markings on your back.
9. Please note it is COMMON for patient to have itching on certain areas where the allergens are placed.
10. Your final reading will occur at 72 hours on Thursday. In some cases your doctor may request you come in for a 96 hour reading. At that point the physician will review your test and provide you with avoidance information on any of the allergens that were noted to be positive. Your doctor will then instruct you to correlate your test findings with your exposures at home and work.