

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. Please call our office 30 minutes prior to your scheduled appointment to confirm your arrival. The nurse will then begin preparing your patch test at that time, saving time once you arrive. This can take about 20-30 minutes. **Call ext. 141.**
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 breastfeeding.
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 in 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 the 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.

*****Please call your insurance to verify this procedure is a covered benefit & what your financial responsibility will be. We will verify your benefits also, but we cannot guarantee your benefits***** Codes: Day 1-95044, Day 2-99211, Day 3-99214

Patient Guide to Patch Testing

Q & A



What is allergic contact dermatitis?



This is a skin reaction that occurs when you touch or come in close contact with substances to which you are allergic. Your skin can become itchy, cracked, red, sore and may even bleed. The substances that cause this reaction are referred to as allergens and can be an ingredient in your shampoo, soap, makeup, aftershave, jewelry, medication or your clothing. You may also have a reaction to an allergen in your workplace because allergens are common in cleaning supplies, paper and ink, disinfectants, construction materials and rubber products.

How does it work?



It's easy! You will wear the patches applied by your doctor, most likely on your back, for 2 days. During this time you should not remove the panels unless your doctor tells you to do so. After 48 hours, you will return to your doctor's office to have the panels removed. Allergic reactions are sometimes seen at this point; however, your doctor will need to see you again for a second reading 2-5 days after the patches are removed to ensure an accurate diagnosis. Your doctor will discuss the results of your patch test at this time. S/he should also be able to inform you of substances that you should avoid and ways that you can prevent future contact with that substance.

Please note: You should not expose the patches to extreme moisture or submerge the patches in water if you bathe. It's important to allow the allergens to maintain contact with your skin for 48 hours to obtain an accurate reading. Panels that are removed or damaged will require a complete retest.

How will I know what is causing my allergy?



Your doctor may give you a patch test to identify potential allergens. Patch testing is a reliable, safe, and easy way to diagnose the cause of your specific allergic contact dermatitis. Your doctor will apply a panel or series of panels containing allergens to your body. Each chamber will contain a different allergen, and each panel can contain up to 12 individual chambers.

Visit
smartpractice.com/dermatology
to learn more about
allergic contact dermatitis



Frequently asked questions



1. What should I do if my skin itches or burns while wearing the patch tests?

Itching and burning sensations are common side effects. Try not to scratch the patch test area. Scratching can irritate your skin and may make the itching worse. It can also decrease your doctor's ability to interpret your test results. If the itching and burning become severe, contact your doctor immediately.

2. What should I do if my patch starts to come off?

Your doctor probably will have applied a tape or covering over your test panels. If, however, the panel becomes loose, you can use a hypoallergenic tape to reattach it to your skin. Apply the tape only around the outside edge of the panels.

3. Can I shower?

You should minimize your exposure to water. If your doctor has used a water-resistant covering, s/he will let you know if you can shower. Even after the patches are removed, you will need to limit showering and avoid scrubbing the test site until after the final reading.

4. Can I go to the gym?

Depending on the type of panel applied, you may be able to go to the gym for a light workout. Some patch test materials are water and sweat-resistant. Your doctor will determine what's appropriate for your specific tests. Check with your physician.

5. What will a positive reaction look like?

Your doctor will review your results when the patch test(s) are removed. Positive reactions range from a small skin rash with a little swelling to red, blistered skin.



6. How long will this testing take?

Usually your patches will remain in place on your skin for 2 days (48 hours). After this time, your doctor will remove the patches and will set an appointment for you to return in 2-5 days. Most reactions occur within this period; however, some reactions can take as long as 10 days to appear. Your doctor will be able to tell you how long it will likely take to complete your testing based on your history and symptoms.

7. What if my results are negative?

Negative results are common. Patch testing helps to narrow the potential allergens that are causing your reaction. If you test negative on the initial testing, your doctor may have to test you again using another set of allergens. This process of elimination will continue until your specific allergen is identified. 35 of the most common allergens cause 80% of all allergic contact dermatitis.

Follow-up appointments

It is important for you to attend all of your follow-up appointments. Please find your schedule below.

Patch Removal/1st Reading

DAY _____

DATE _____

TIME _____

2nd Reading

DAY _____

DATE _____

TIME _____

3rd Reading (if necessary)

DAY _____

DATE _____

TIME _____



CALL 800.878.3837

VISIT smartpractice.com/dermatology

to learn more about allergic contact dermatitis

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