

## Patient Information– Skin Allergy Test

**You will need to stop taking all antihistamines and cold and flu medications for at least 4 days before this test as this will change your result. If you cannot stop these medications please contact the Department or your referring doctor prior to your appointment.**

Common antihistamine medications include: Telfast, Dimetapp, Zyrtec, Polaramine, Claratyne, Dramamine, Travacalm, Periactin, Phenergan and Avil.

This information sheet is a guide and should be considered together with advice from your referring doctor.

### What is a skin allergy test?

The skin allergy test is a highly sensitive technique to test for immediate allergic response. Skin allergy testing is widely used to diagnose allergic conditions such as hay fever, allergic asthma and eczema. The Laboratory tests for house dust mite, cat and dog dander, mould spores, pollen from relevant grasses, and certain tree pollens. The test requires a positive (Histamine) and negative control to help validate the results. The Laboratory does not test any food allergens. The test results can help the doctor identify any allergic reactions and provide advice on management.

### How is a skin allergy test done?

During the skin allergy test, droplets of allergen solution are placed onto the skin of your forearm and then gently scratched with a sterile lancet. After a few minutes the droplets of allergen are wiped away. Testing can take 20 minutes and during this time you may develop itching, redness and a lump or wheal at the site may occur. The size of the lump / wheal is measured and recorded to determine the test results.


### Possible adverse effects:

The most common side effect is the development of itching and redness at the testing site that will go away with time. Where needed, staff will apply a cream to reduce itching or discomfort. It is also possible to take oral antihistamines or an ice pack if discomfort continues. Very rarely more serious allergic reactions may occur – these include asthma and/or anaphylaxis. In these cases, our staff are trained to provide emergency treatment.

Please note: some other medications such as some mood altering medications (eg antidepressants and neuroleptics), migraine medications, anti nausea medications and anti reflux medications may also affect the results of skin allergy testing. Please discuss with your doctor before you have your test. Skin allergy testing should not be performed when your asthma is unstable or when you are unwell.

You will be asked to sign a consent form before proceeding to the test.

**More information:** If you have any questions regarding the test, or you have to take antihistamines, call the Department on 02 6244 2066.

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