



## PATCH TESTING PROCEDURE

**What is a patch test?** Patch testing evaluates whether specific substance(s) are causing delayed skin reactions (contact dermatitis).

**Before testing:** The skin on your back must be clear of rashes so that we can test.

- *2-4 weeks before:* Do not expose your back to the sun or sunbed.
- *1 week before:* Do not use topical corticosteroids (i.e., hydrocortisone, desonide, triamcinolone, clobetasol) or topical tacrolimus (Protopic 0.03% and 0.1%) and pimecrolimus (Elidel).
- If your provider recommends, bring cosmetics or a sample of the product of concern (ideally flat and small since applied to your back) to the clinic at least a *few days before* testing day.
- You may continue using antihistamines [i.e., cetirizine (Zyrtec), diphenhydramine (Benadryl), fexofenadine (Allegra), hydroxyzine (Atarax), loratadine (Claritin)].

**On the day of testing:**

- Shower/bathe the morning of the test, as you **cannot get your back wet** *once the patches are applied until the first reading ~ 48 hours*.
- Do not apply any creams, lotions, or medications to your back.
- Wear dark, comfortable clothing, as pen marks may stain clothing. Women may want to avoid wearing bras.

**While patches are on (up to 48 hours):**

- Be careful not to get the test patches or the surrounding area wet. If it becomes wet, it may loosen, allowing the test substances to lose contact or be washed away. Avoid showering, exercising, or sunbathing.
- Try not to scratch or rub the area. Skin that has become red and irritated by scratching will make it more difficult for your doctor to interpret the results.
- Please call our office if the patches cause extreme itching, pain, or burning.
- If a patch starts to peel off, reinforce with medical tape, such as Micropore or Scanpor. If the patch comes off, note the time and date.

**When are the patches removed and readings done?**

- 1<sup>st</sup> reading (48 hours after patches are placed): The patches will be removed by the nursing staff, areas re-marked, and the back examined by a medical practitioner
- After the 1<sup>st</sup> reading, you will be allowed to shower and may allow water to spray directly on the test area. No scrubbing or rubbing of the skin when washing or drying the test area. Do not apply anything else besides water to your back.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> reading (72-96 hours depending on physician's request) by the medical practitioner.
- Your allergist may recommend a 3<sup>rd</sup> reading and will inform you.

*PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE IF THERE ARE QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS*