

# Skin Prick Testing Patient information Dermatology

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**Your doctor has recommended that you have a skin prick test. This leaflet will explain about the test and how our allergy clinic works.**

## **What can skin prick testing tell us?**

Skin prick testing is used to confirm allergies rather than diagnose them. Sometimes a negative result can be used to exclude an allergy. Skin prick testing only gives us information about immediate allergic reactions such as those to foods, drugs and pollens. It does not give us information on delayed allergic reactions like contact dermatitis. This is tested for by patch testing.

## **What is involved?**

Once the doctor has determined which allergens are to be tested by listening to your history, droplets of the allergen are placed on the inside of your forearm. The skin will be pricked through the solutions to let them enter the skin. A positive reaction will occur in 15 minutes as an itchy pink swelling. This will be measured and recorded.

## **Is it painful?**

The test is painless except for the small pricking sensation initially. The itching of a positive reaction will wear off gradually.

## **What do I need to do?**

If you are taking antihistamines you need to stop taking these before your appointment as they can affect the results.

Loratadine needs to be stopped one week before your appointment.

All other antihistamines need to be stopped three days before your appointment.

If you are taking ranitidine this needs to be stopped a week before your appointment.

If you feel that it is not appropriate to stop your medication or are unsure about doing so then please telephone us for advice.

You may be asked to bring some of the substances that you are to be tested to. Please bring a small piece of your substance with you individually packed and preferably fresh, e.g a piece of fruit rather than a prepared fruit salad.

## **After the test**

The results of your skin prick test will be explained to you at your appointment, along with the implications of the results. Please feel free to ask any questions that you may have. They will be considered with your specific history in mind. A letter will be sent to your GP with the results.

Further help and advice.....

NHS direct - <http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/food-allergy/pages/diagnosis.aspx>

Allergy UK - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/allergies/diagnosis/>

**If you have any further questions please telephone the dermatology department on any of the numbers below:**

**01493 453545 or 01493 453602 during the hours of 8:30 and 17:15 Monday to Friday.**

## Feedback

We want your visit to be as comfortable as possible. Please talk to the person in charge if you have any concerns. If the ward/department staff are unable to resolve your concern, please ask for our Patient Advice and Liaison (PALS) information. Please be assured that raising a concern will not impact on your care. **Before you leave the hospital you will be asked to complete a Friends and Family Test feedback card.** Providing your feedback is vital in helping to transform NHS services and to support patient choice.

### Trust Values

- Courtesy and respect
- A welcoming and positive attitude
  - Polite, friendly and interested in people
  - Value and respect people as individuals  
So people feel **welcome**
- Attentively kind and helpful
- Look out for dignity, privacy & humanity
  - Attentive, responsive & take time to help
  - Visible presence of staff to provide care  
So people feel **cared for**

- Responsive communication
- Listen to people & answer their questions
  - Keep people clearly informed
  - Involve people  
So people feel **in control**
- Effective and professional
- Safe, knowledgeable and reassuring
  - Effective care / services from joined up teams
  - Organised and timely, looking to improve  
So people feel **safe**



The hospital can arrange for an interpreter or person to sign to assist you in communicating effectively with staff during your stay. Please let us know.

**For a large print version of this leaflet, contact PALS 01493 453240**