

Next Century Medical Care

Patch Testing Information and Consent

Patch Testing / Contact Dermatitis Information: What is contact dermatitis?

Contact dermatitis is inflammation of the skin provoked by contact with certain substances. This inflammation can be either irritant or allergic. Everyone who is exposed to certain caustic substances (e.g. alkali, acids) will develop some degree of irritant contact dermatitis. On the other hand, there are other substances (e.g. dyes, preservatives, fragrances) to which a minority of the population are truly allergic. Even small amounts of allergens can provoke allergic contact dermatitis (e.g. redness and itching) in sensitized individuals.

What is patch testing?

Patch testing involves the exposure of your skin to arrays (patches) of allergens to test for the presence or absence of an allergic response (i.e. testing for allergic contact dermatitis). In most cases we test for 36 of the most common contact allergens. If you have a contact allergy, this test has an approximately 70% chance of uncovering it. After determining if an allergen is relevant to your rash, you can then avoid that substance, often leading to improvement of your skin condition. Please note that patch testing does not always explain the cause of a skin reaction or rash and does not include environmental or food allergy testing.

Potential risks/side effects of patch testing:

Typically, discomfort (e.g. burning/itching) at patch sites and possible flare of dermatitis could occur. Rarely, hyper/hypopigmentation, scarring as a result of strong allergic reactions, inadvertent sensitization to patch materials, or anaphylaxis could occur. Pregnant or lactating women should NOT undergo patch testing.

Alternatives to patch testing:

Instead of patch testing you could try to eliminate suspected products from your environment. After successful elimination it can take several weeks (e.g. often over a month) until improvement of your rash.

Insurance considerations:

Most insurance plans cover patch testing. To be certain that your plan covers the testing, we recommend that you call your insurance company and verify coverage of the following codes.

- Diagnosis code = L23.9; allergic contact dermatitis, unspecified cause
- Procedure code = 95044; quantity 36 patches

Medicines and Activities to Avoid:

Please let us know if you have recently been prescribed prednisone (i.e. oral steroids) or a steroid injection, as they can affect patch test results. Antihistamines (e.g. Benadryl, Zyrtec, etc.) will not interfere with patch testing.

- If you are using topical medications, do not apply them to the back for 5 days prior to your appointment.
- If you use over-the-counter moisturizers, do not apply them to your back for 2 days prior to your appointment.
- Avoid sun exposure to your back for 2 weeks prior to patch testing
- After patches are placed it is critical to keep area dry:
 - PATCHES CANNOT GET WET WHEN THEY ARE ON YOUR BACK.
 - No showering or bathing while patches are on your back.
 - Washing hair in a sink and sponge bathing is okay as long as patches remain dry.

- Avoid strenuous activity or exercise that could make you sweat, as well as movements that could cause the patches to come off; reinforce loose patches with tape (paper tape preferred).
- Ideally, do not take a shower or bath all week.
- However, if needed you can shower after the patches are removed.
- But do not scrub your back. Markings must remain on your back for readings.

The Patch Testing Schedule:

1st visit: Patch tests are applied

This consent must be completed prior to scheduling your patch testing. It is helpful to wear loose-fitting clothes. You will meet with the testing provider and your questionnaire will be reviewed. Tiny quantities of materials in individual square plastic chambers will be applied to the back. They will be kept in place with special hypoallergenic adhesive. The patches are to stay in place and remain undisturbed for 48 hours. Itching is a good sign, indicating potential positive reactions!

If you develop extreme itch/pain call the office for further instructions. If it is after hours, try Benadryl and please call the office the next business day. If it can't wait until the next business day, please call the office to access afterhours phone menu options. You can leave a message and one of the healthcare providers will return your call.

2nd visit: Patches are removed for 48-hour reading

Remember that you may not wash your back until after your final (3rd) visit. Should you become allergic to one or more of the substances, an itchy rash or redness will appear at the corresponding test area. Please wear an old or dark colored shirt to this visit since the sites will be marked with a blue marker (which could stain clothes).

3rd visit: Final reading at 96 hours

Please bring in your commonly used products from home to your 3rd visit. If the products do not have ingredient labels and you have internet access, please take the time to find a list of ingredients. This is important in helping to determine the cause of potential reactions.

The marked areas on the back must still be visible at this appointment. The provider will examine your back and look for any positive findings. Further instructions will be given based on findings.

Useful informational websites: o www.mypatchlink.com has videos about your relevant allergens o www.acdscamp.org is a database listing products that are safe for you to use My signature below means that I have read and understood this Information and Consent form and hereby authorize the dermatology staff at Massachusetts Dermatology Associates to apply patches with test allergens to my skin.

Patient Signature

Date