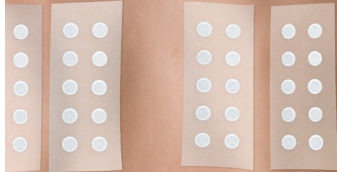


Patient Guide to Patch Testing

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 _____

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VISIT smartpractice.com/dermatology
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