

# Patch Test Instructions

Patch testing is used to determine if your rash is caused by an allergic reaction to specific substances. Our office offers a test of the 36 most common allergens as well as 10 additional allergens used in cosmetics. These tests can potentially detect allergies to makeup, shampoos, rubber, construction materials, clothing, soaps, cleaning supplies and much more. Patch testing typically involves three visits in a single week.

**What is allergic contact dermatitis?** This is a rash that occurs when you touch or come in contact with substances that you are allergic to. Skin can be itchy, cracked, red, sore, and even bleed. The substances that cause this reaction can be an ingredient in your makeup, aftershave, shampoo, jewelry, medication, and clothing. You may also find these substances at work in your cleaning supplies, paper, ink, medicines, disinfectants, construction materials and rubber.

## Preparation for your testing.

- Wear comfortable clothing.
- No oral corticosteroids for 2 weeks prior to testing.
- No skin lotions, alcohol, irritating products or medicines on your back for 24 hours prior to your visit and during your testing week.
- Shave off excessive back hair with an electric razor the night before or morning of your visit.
- Avoid prolonged sun exposure prior to your visit and during your testing week.

## Day 1- your first visit (usually Monday)

Paper strips containing the antigens are placed on your back. This may occasionally feel slightly uncomfortable or itchy.

## Day 2- your second visit (usually Wednesday)

The strips will be removed in 48 hours with the first reading being done 20-30 minutes after removal. This visit will last about 30 minutes. Your physician will advise you if additional readings are necessary over the next 5 to 7 days.

## Day 3- your third visit (usually Friday)

This 10-30 minute visit involves a final interpretation along with a discussion and explanation of the test results,

## Instructions during your testing week

- Try to avoid scratching. If you are itchy you may take an antihistamine such as diphenhydramine (Benadryl).
- Do not get your back wet until after your 3<sup>rd</sup> visit. You can sponge bathe the rest of your body.
- Avoid heavy exercise.
- If you notice a loosening of the patches have someone press the adhesive onto the skin. If necessary you can also apply additional tape to the edges.

**Risks:** Occasionally, some patients have vigorous reactions to some substances. This may result in local discomfort which will be treated at the follow up appointments. Also, some chemicals may temporarily stain the skin because of a brisk allergic reaction or because the chemical dyes the skin. These changes are usually temporary and will fade with time. Rarely, you may observe a reaction at the test site as late as 3 weeks after your visit. If this happens, please report it to us, it may be important. If you develop severe itching, blistering, or tenderness in the area of the patches please call the clinic. Rarely severe allergic reactions may occur. Seek immediate medical attention if you develop symptoms of severe allergic reaction such as trouble breathing or wheezing; a swollen tongue or throat; a drop in blood pressure resulting in dizziness or fainting; a weak and rapid pulse; hives or widespread itching.

## Your patch testing schedule:

Patient name: \_\_\_\_\_

Day 1: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time Day of Week Date

Day 2: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time Day of Week Date

Day 3: \_\_\_\_\_  
Time Day of Week Date

**Cost:** Coverage varies depending on your insurance.