

## PATIENT INFORMATION

# Patch Tests

### What is patch testing?

Patch testing can help your doctor determine whether your skin condition is caused or aggravated by an allergy to substances that come into contact with your skin, e.g. substances at home or in leisure activities.

### What does patch testing involve?

You will be tested to around 40 standard substances commonly in contact with the skin, e.g. rubber chemicals, metals, perfumes and plants, and also additional substances depending on your skin problem. You may be tested to some of your own home products.

### What should I bring to the patch test clinic?

On the first appointment please bring:

- **A list of medication:** any prescribed drugs you are taking
- **All ointments and creams:** only those you are currently using
- **Your own products:** as agreed with the doctor who referred you for patch testing.

### What does patch testing involve?

Three visits to hospital are required.

On the first visit, on a Monday, you will be seen by a doctor and then by registered nurse or assistant practitioner, who will apply the patch tests. The substances to be tested will be applied in special small containers, to your back, and the sites marked with ink. Allow up to 1 hour for this visit. These remain in place until your next visit.

On the Wednesday a registered nurse or assistant practitioner will remove the patch tests and note any positive results.

On the Friday a doctor will examine your back and discuss with you the relevance of any reactions.

**Please note:**

- The sites may itch
- It is possible that your patch tests will be negative. This is helpful since, as far as we can tell, we will have eliminated a contact allergy as a cause of your skin problem.
- Positive reactions become red and itchy at the test site and usually become apparent by the Friday reading although, they can occasionally take longer. If you do develop a late reaction, please contact the dermatology secretary on (Tel: 01803 655038).
- Some patch test substances may stain the skin.
- We will not be able to patch test you if you are pregnant,
- Breastfeeding, have extensive eczema on your back, have had sun exposure or used a sun bed in the previous 2 weeks or are on medication that suppresses your immune system.

**Do not:**

- Get your back wet during the tests; you can wash down with a flannel
- Wear your best clothes as the marker ink may stain
- Expose your back to the sun during this procedure

**Do:**

- Avoid sport or heavy physical work during the week of the tests
- Wear an old bra or T-shirt for the week of the tests and wear a T-shirt or vest to sleep in order to protect the tests
- Reinforce the tests with tape if any of the tests become loose. If a whole patch comes loose, remove and note the time and date
- Contact us on tel: 01803 655038 if you are concerned

**What side effects may occur?**

Side effects are rare, but include:

- **Skin reddening and itching:** from positive test results. This usually disappears after a few days
- **Persistent reaction:** some positive test reactions, e.g. to gold, may persist for up to a month
- **Flare of eczema:** a positive patch test may be accompanied by a flare of existing or previous eczema
- **Pigmentary change:** an increase or decrease in pigment may be seen at the site of patch tests
- **Infection or scarring:** these are rare
- **Allergy:** very rarely, about 1 in 500 times, you may become allergic to one of the substances applied during patch testing. In practice this does not seem to cause a problem in the long term.

**PATCH TEST CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER  
01803 655038**

**CONFIRMATION OF RECEIPT OF PATCH TEST INFORMATION  
LEAFLET FOR PATIENTS**

Patient's name

Hospital number

Date of birth

Address

I confirm that I have received the patch test information leaflet for patients. I understand that I am able to ask the doctor or nurse any questions regarding what is involved in the procedure and the possible side effects. I can stop the test at any time.

Signed .....

Date .....

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For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.