



## **Allergy Skin Testing Instructions**

### **What is skin testing?**

Skin testing is a rapid way to detect if your child is allergic to an inhalant, contact, or food. It is more sensitive and economical than allergy blood tests. Specifically, it tests for the presence of allergic antibodies, called IgE, in the skin.

### **What are some of the indications for skin testing?**

- Allergic asthma
- Allergic rhinitis (hay fever)
- Eczema or atopic dermatitis
- Itching/hives
- Sinus trouble
- Anaphylaxis
- Food Allergy

### **How is it performed?**

No scratches required! A disposable one-time use plastic device with multiple prongs will be used to introduce small amounts of particular allergens. Skin testing can be performed on the back and/or arms.

### **How long will the skin testing take?**

You should plan on 60-90 minutes for your child's skin allergy testing. The application process itself takes only a few minutes, but we will then let the allergens sit on the skin for 15-20 minutes. After the allergens have been removed, we will monitor your child for worsening reactions for at least 30 minutes. We recommend bringing something to distract your child with during the appointment. Food is not allowed as a distractor as it may disrupt the accuracy of the testing.

### **What allergens might be tested?**

- Common inhaled indoor allergens:
  - Dust mites, Cockroach, Animal proteins (usually Cat, dog, mouse, horse, and other less common animals are available as well), feathers
- Common inhaled outdoor allergens:
  - Trees, weeds, fungi, molds
- Common foods

If you suspect your child has a specific allergen provoking his/her symptoms, please inform their provider.

**What are the risks?**

Your child may experience anxiety, skin irritation with local itching and swelling, and minor bleeding. Local irritation of the skin usually subsides after 1-2 hours. Excessive itching may be treated with oral antihistamines, or a topical spray or cream.

Occasionally, a delayed local reaction may occur at the site of skin testing. This usually occurs several hours after testing and may last from a day to a whole week. These reactions are usually not serious and will disappear gradually over the next week. Excessive warmth or lack of improvement may indicate a mild skin infection. The reaction should be measured and reported to your child's provider.

On rare occasions, very sensitive (allergic) individuals may experience a severe systemic reaction called anaphylaxis. Symptoms may include increased itching of the eyes, nose, face, or body, increased sneezing or runny nose, congestion, throat or chest tightness, wheezing, lightheadedness, nausea and vomiting, hives, profound anxiety, and shock. Anaphylaxis may be life threatening if not treated promptly.

Our providers and staff are fully trained in the treatment of mild to severe reactions including anaphylaxis, and we take the utmost care in ensuring your child's safety. For this reason, if your child is having worsening asthma, fever, or an active infection, we may defer his or her skin testing procedure for a later date. Please call the office within 24 hours if you think you need to reschedule.

**How will we know if your child is allergic to something tested?**

The skin will swell up and itch, like a hive. Positive and negative controls are used in the skin testing panel in which to compare the tested allergens. We note the size and grade of your child's reactions to determine what allergies might exist. Based on his or her history, symptoms, exam, and skin test results, our providers will assist in determining what your child might be allergic to and offer treatment options if possible.

**What preparation for the skin test should be done?**

Antihistamine and other medicines may block the histamine response, making skin test results inaccurate.

Please STOP these medications THREE DAYS PRIOR to your child's skin test day.

- RANITIDINE (ZANTAC)
- CIMETIDINE (TAGAMET)
- PHENERGAN
- SINGULAR
- ALL BETA BLOCKERS

Please STOP these medications SEVEN to TEN DAYS PRIOR to your child's skin test day.

- ALAVERT
- ALLERX, ALLERX-D
- ALLEGRA
- ASTELIN nasal spray
- BENADRYL
- CLARITIN or CLARINEX
- DIPHENHYDRAMINE or BENADRYL
- FEXOFENADINE
- HISTUSSIN HC
- PHENERGAN
- ZYRTEC

ALL over-the-counter medicines for cough, cold, and allergy. These drugs often contain antihistamines, such as: ACTIFED, ALLEREST, BROPHENIRAMINE, CLORPHENIRAMINE, CHLORTRIMETON, CONTAC, DIMETAPP, DRISTAN, DRIXORAL, DURAHIST, D'ALLERGY, ROBITUSSIN, RYNATAN, NYTOL, NYQUIL, TYLENOL PM, TAVIST, TRIAMINIC, TYLENOL SINUS, EQUATE ALLERGY, WAL-ITIN, etc.

Please STOP these medicines FOURTEEN DAYS PRIOR to your child's skin test day. Please consult with their PRESCRIBING DOCTOR FOR APPROVAL.

- ANTIVERT (meclizine)
- ATARAX (hydroxyzine)
- ELAVIL (amitriptyline HCL)
- REMERON (mitrazapine)
- SINEQUAN (doxepin)
- TORFRANIL (imipramine)

Please let the staff know if your child HAS TAKEN ANY antihistamines prior to his or her skin test. It may still be possible to skin test even if medicine has been taken recently.

**Please inform the medical assistant if:**

- **If your child is/maybe pregnant**
- **Your child is taking a medication or an eye drop that is in the BETA-BLOCKER class. These medications are usually used to treat high blood pressure or glaucoma (Examples: carvedilol, propranolol, atenolol, timolol eye drops, etc).**
- **Your child is taking an MAO inhibitor.**

Please **DO CONTINUE** taking inhaler medicines for asthma, oral steroids, steroid nasal sprays and other medicines that are not antihistamines. Decongestants, such as SUDAFED or PHENYLEPHRINE, are fine to take temporarily while your child is off antihistamines depending on the age of your child. If your child has asthma, a breathing test or peak flow measurement may be taken before proceeding with the test.

Your child's arms and backs should be clear and free of lotions or cosmetics. **Please do not wear any perfumes or fragrances on the day of testing.**

**After your child's skin test.**

Your child may resume antihistamine medicines immediately. Your child may take Benadryl or another antihistamine to relieve discomfort if needed. Topical steroids may also be used to relieve discomfort. Please wash and clean their skin as usual. Please have your child abstain from any vigorous activity for several hours after testing.