

## SKIN ALLERGY PATIENT INFORMATION SHEET

Your doctor has requested a skin sensitivity test to determine whether you have any allergies. You must stop taking all antihistamines (eg Claratyne, Telfast, Zyrtec, Phenergan, Zadine, Polaramine and others) **for three days prior to your appointment**, as these will interfere with the testing and may result in false negative results.

The test is performed using a number of substances which most commonly cause symptoms such as yours. It is not possible to test you for every potential allergy and negative results do not exclude these. Negative results, however, make the common allergies less likely. On the other hand, small positive reactions do not necessarily mean you are allergic to that substance (eg wheat and other foods). So it is important to discuss the results with your doctor.

In extremely rare cases a **serious** adverse reaction may occur, however completion of the Patient History questionnaire prior to testing would alert staff to any pre-disposing factors and the test would not be performed. As this test is only performed in clinics where a Doctor is on-site, any Emergency provisions are covered.

Testing is performed by applying a range of small drops of fluid to the skin and a prick is made through the drop before it is blotted away. Included in the range is fluid we expect all patients to react to (Histamine) and fluid we expect no reaction from (Negative Control).

Positive reactions will become itchy and red with a small lump similar to a mosquito bite. It is important not to scratch these. The size of the reactions will be measured approximately 15 minutes after application of the allergen.

Occasionally, positive reactions can occur up to 4 hours after application (late phase reactions). This is usually similar to the initial reaction but usually less itchy. However, often it will last longer. Please contact us if this occurs.

Itching of positive tests can be annoying but it is usually short lived. It is important to try to avoid scratching as this may result in infection if the skin becomes broken. A topical cream, Anthisan can soothe the itching. A cold flannel or ice can also be useful. However, never apply ice for longer than 5 minutes. Oral antihistamines can also relieve the itching.

Skin sensitivity tests are very safe but if you feel at all unwell during the test, it is important to inform the staff member performing the test. In addition, if after the testing, you have any concern, **please contact your GP immediately**.

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If you have any problems, please contact one of the following:

Pathlab Waikato  
Ph: 07 858 0799

Pathlab Bay of Plenty  
Ph: 07 578 7073

Pathlab Whakatane  
Ph: 07 306 0906