

# Preparation & Instructions

## Skin Allergy Tests

### ***Introduction***

A wide variety of substances may cause allergic reactions in some people. Skin allergy testing is the procedure used to determine which particular substances (allergens) are responsible for provoking an allergic reaction. Your doctor has requested that you have a skin prick test using a variety of allergens and a control substance called histamine.

### ***What is involved in the test?***

You will be asked to provide some simple information about any medications you are taking, and have your height and weight measured. Skin prick testing is most commonly performed on the forearm, although the back is sometimes used. The arm is first cleaned with alcohol. A drop of commercially-produced allergen extract is placed onto a marked area of skin. Each drop of allergen is carefully 'pricked' with a small clean lancet. With a positive reaction to an allergen the skin becomes itchy within a few minutes and then becomes red and swollen with a "wheal" in the centre, similar to a small mosquito-like lump at the site of testing over 15-20 minutes.

Skin tests are slightly uncomfortable, but are usually well tolerated, even by small children. Local itch and swelling normally subsides within 1-2 hours. More prolonged or severe swelling may be treated with an oral antihistamine, topical corticosteroid cream and an ice pack. Severe allergic reactions from allergy testing in asthma or hay fever are very rare.

### ***What about the other drugs I take?***

Because a number of drugs will affect your test results, you must stop taking them before you have your test.

You should not take the following medications, for the given times if possible;

Hay fever and allergy medications, in general, including Telfast, Fexotabs, Claratyne, Clarinase, Zadine, Zyrtec, Polaramine, for 4 DAYS before the test.

Other medications (including some antidepressants) may also interfere with the test, including Stemetil, Sinequan, Tryptanol, Endep, Tolvon and Surmontil should be ceased for 2 DAYS before the test. However, **please check with your Doctor before stopping any antidepressants.**

If you are unsure about the medications you should avoid please discuss with your Doctor or contact the laboratory on 8232 4200.

Respiratory inhalers or nasal sprays do not affect the test and can be taken as usual.

***Advice and information***

Your doctor has requested this test to assess your allergic status. However, you are under no obligation to have the test, and if you choose not to this will not affect your relationship with your doctor. If you require any further details about the test, please do not hesitate to contact your own doctor.

The instructions and advice in this document is recommended by Adelaide Respiratory for testing at our laboratory according to internationally accepted. We ask that if you are having the test at another laboratory that you follow their recommendations and advice.