

ALLERGY SKIN TESTING FAQ

1. WHAT IS ALLERGY SKIN TESTING?

Allergy skin testing involves the use of substances that provoke an allergic response or reaction, commonly referred to as allergens. Local area tree, grass, and weed pollens, molds, and animal dander are examples of such substances that are made into what we call allergen extract.

2. HOW IS SKIN TESTING DONE?

Allergen extracts are placed just beneath the surface of the skin for a small period of time. This is done through a series of small injections, which place the allergen extract just beneath the first few layers of skin. Minor discomfort and itching are common during the procedure.

3. WHAT DO THE RESULTS SHOW?

Skin testing is used to diagnose immediate-type hypersensitivity allergies. This is the most common type of allergic reaction. Such reactions are caused by certain substances in the body, called immunoglobulin E (IgE) antibodies. Antibodies are proteins that fight off foreign invaders. Skin testing is performed to measure the level of IgE antibodies in the blood by provoking a local inflammatory response on the skin. Such responses may include the development of red, raised bumps on the skin surrounded by a red, inflamed area, similar to a mosquito bite. The exact size of the raised area shows how allergic you are to that specific antigen.

4. HOW DOES SKIN TESTING HELP ME?

Skin testing is a simple way to find out what specific substances causing your allergies. By pinpointing the specific allergens causing your symptoms, your doctor can tailor your treatment too specifically to what you are allergic to. Skin testing also provides valuable information about how your body responds to allergens. Such information is helpful in the creation of a treatment plan to keep your allergies under control.

5. HOW DO I PREPARE FOR MY ALLERGY TESTING?

Your doctor will give you a list of medications that must be discontinued one week before your allergy skin testing. If these medications are taken within 7 days prior to testing, the results will not yield accurate results. If you take these medications within 7 days prior to testing, you will be asked to reschedule your testing until a later date. Wear a short sleeve shirt as testing is performed on the upper arms and forearms.

If you have any additional questions, please call our Allergy Department during normal business hours which are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.