

Patch Testing FAQ

How does Patch Testing Work?

Patches will be applied on your back and will be kept on for 2 days. Please do not remove the patches. After 48 hours, you will return to our office to have the panels removed. Allergic reactions are sometimes seen at this point; however, your provider may need to see you again for a second reading 2-5 days after the patches are removed to ensure an accurate diagnosis. Your provider should then be able to inform you of substances that you should avoid.



How should I prepare for patch testing?

On the day of patch placement, please arrive with a clean, dry back. Prior to placement, we will discuss any medications (prescription or over-the-counter) you're currently taking. Please avoid taking any over-the-counter or prescription antihistamines at least one week prior to the test, and one week post removal. No topical steroids on your back.

It is important for you to attend each of your appointments. Please find your schedule below:

Patch Placement:

Date *Time*

Patch Removal/1st Reading:

Date *Time*

2nd Reading (if needed):

Date *Time*

What will I be tested with?

The allergens you are tested with will depend on your health history and exposure risks. We will take a detailed history to help select the allergens to test. Some of the most common types of allergens used for patch testing include certain *metals; rubber chemicals; preservatives found in many personal care and cosmetic products; fragrances; and medicinal substances such as antibiotics and topical corticosteroids*. This does NOT test pollens, foods, animal dander, grasses, or hay.

What should I do if my skin itches or burns while wearing the patch tests?

Itching and burning sensations are common side effects. Please try not to scratch the patch test area. Instead, try using pressure (EX: press against a door jam) or applying a cold, dry cloth or material (no ice) to the affected area. If the itching and burning become severe, please contact our office.

What should I do if my patch starts to come off?

We will apply a tape or covering over your test panels. If, however, the panel becomes loose, you can use a hypoallergenic tape to reattach it to your skin. Apply the tape only around the outside edge of the panels.

Can I shower?

Please minimize any exposure to water as your patches should stay dry. After the patches are removed, you will still need to limit showering and avoid scrubbing the test site until after the final reading.

Can I go to the gym?

Until final reading day, avoid perspiration from physical activity or heat.

What will a positive reaction look like?

Your provider will review your results when the patch test(s) are removed. Positive reactions range from a small skin rash with a little swelling to red, blistered skin.



What if my results are negative?

Negative results are possible. Patch testing helps to narrow the potential allergens that are causing your reaction. If you test negative on the initial testing, your provider may refer you to an allergist.