Mersey and West Lancashire Teaching Hospitals
NHS Trust

Patch testing

If you need this information in a different language or accessible format, please speak to a member of staff who can arrange it for you

Якщо вам потрібна ця інформація іншою мовою або в доступному форматі, зверніться до співробітника, який зможе це для вас організувати

إذا كنت بحاجة إلى هذه المعلومات بلغة مختلفة أو بصيغة مُيسَّرة، فيرجى التحدث إلى أحد العاملين والذي سيقوم بترتيب ذلك لك.

如果您需要其他語言或無障礙格式的資訊，請聯繫工作人員，他們將為您安排。

இந்தத் தகவலானது உங்களுக்கு வேறொரு மொழியிலோ அல்லது எளிதில் அணுகக்கூடிய வடிவத்திலோ தேவைப்பட்டால், அதனை உங்களுக்காக ஏற்பாடு செய்துதரக்கூடிய பணியாளர் ஒருவரிடம் தயவுசெய்து பேசவும்.

Dacă aveți nevoie de aceste informații într-o altă limbă sau într-un format accesibil, vă rugăm să vă adresați unui membru al personalului, care va face demersurile necesare pentru dumneavoastră.

اگر به این اطلاعات به زبانی دیگر یا در قالب دسترس‌پذیر نیاز دارید، لطفاً با یکی از کارکنان صحبت کنید تا آن را برای شما تهیه کند.

Se necessitar desta informação numa língua diferente ou num formato acessível, por favor fale com um membro da equipa que poderá organizá-la para si

اگر آپ کو یہ معلومات کسی مختلف زبان یا قابل رسائی فارمیٹ میں چاہیے، تو مہربانی کرکے عملے کے کسی رکن سے بات کریں جو آپ کے لیے اس کا بندوبست کر سکتا ہو۔

Jeżeli niniejsze informacje mają być przekazane w innym języku lub dostępnym formacie, prosimy o kontakt z członkiem personelu, który może to dla Państwa przygotować

ئەگەر پێویستیت بەم زانیاریانە هەیە بە زمانێکی جیاواز یان شێوازێکی تر، تکایە لەگەڵ ئەندامێکی ستافەکە قسە بکە کە دەتوانێت بۆت ڕێکبخات

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What is patch testing?

The aim of patch testing is to find out whether your skin condition is caused or aggravated by an allergy to a substance or substances which have come into contact with your skin. This is called a contact allergy.

Patch testing is only helpful to investigate allergies which are due to direct contact with substances outside the body. It does not detect allergies related to diet or any which is inhaled and may result in sneezing, asthma or hives.

Substances that can cause an allergic reaction are called allergens. They can be found at home, at work or in leisure activities.

What will be tested?

There are 50 substances which most commonly cause contact allergies. You will be tested with these 'standard' substances. These include metals, perfumes, rubber, and preservatives which are found in many cosmetics, shampoos & creams. You may also be tested with some of your own home, work or personal products such as toiletries.

Initial consultation

During this consultation the doctor will determine if there are other substances you will need to be tested for based on your lifestyle and occupation. It is a good idea to bring a list of your medications and any products you feel might be aggravating your condition.

What does patch testing involve?

Patch testing is done over a course of 3 appointments, at later dates, which take place on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This is because contact allergies can take a few days to appear.

First appointment (Monday)

Your patches will be applied to your back by a nurse. Occasionally we may need to use your upper arms or thighs.

Patch strips are made up of 10 individual chambers, each containing a different substance. You will have a minimum of 5 strips across your back. These are then secured with hypoallergenic tape to prevent them from coming off.

Please note that delays are often unavoidable on this visit due to the preparation of these tests. Please allow for extra time.

Second appointment (Wednesday)

The nurse or support practitioner will remove the patches from your back and using a skin marker, mark your back where the chambers have been. The doctor will then carry out the first reading. You will be informed if any reaction has occurred at this point and given any relevant information.

Third appointment (Friday)

A final reading will take place and the doctor will discuss the results and give you information about any substances you may have reacted to.

Helpful information

Before patch testing

- Avoid sunbathing or tanning beds at least 6 weeks before your patch testing appointments, as exposure to UV light can result in inaccurate readings.
- If you are experiencing a flare of your condition and your back is affected, you may not be suitable to be tested.
- Moisturising creams should be stopped the day before the test to ensure the patches stick to your back.
- Topical steroid creams should be stopped 3 - 4 days before your test.
- If you are taking oral steroids at the time of your appointments, please inform the dermatology department as your appointments may need to be postponed.
- Try to avoid taking antihistamines 48 hours before your first appointment.
- If your back is hairy, please shave the day before.
- Patch testing cannot be performed if you are pregnant or breastfeeding. You can be relisted after you have had your baby.

To cancel or postpone your appointments please call patient booking services on 0151 430 1234

After patch test application

- Wear something old and dark as the pen could mark your clothing. Wear a vest top or old t-shirt in bed to prevent patches coming off. Clothes that open at the front can be easier than those which go over your head.

- Avoid exercise/sports including any strenuous stretching or lifting. This is to prevent sweating and the chance of the patches coming loose or falling off.
- Avoid getting your back wet (or any other areas of the body that patches have been applied to) until after your final appointment.
- Do not expose your back to the sun or sunlamps during testing.
- If your patches come loose, please secure with the tape we have given you.
- If your patches come off, please record the date and time they came off and take photos of the area. Do not try to put them back on.

What side effects may occur?

Side effects are rare but can include:

- Skin reddening, itching at the application site (a positive reaction). A strong positive reaction may cause a blister.
- Persistent reaction - some positive test reactions may remain for a few weeks before fading away.
- Flare-up of eczema - a positive patch test may be accompanied by a temporary flare-up of your existing or previous eczema.
- Pigment change - an increase or decrease in pigment (skin colour) may be seen at the place where the patches were, which may last for several months.
- Scarring - very rare (1 in 10,000).
- Allergy - very uncommon, you may become allergic to one of the substances applied during patch testing. If this happens, you will be advised how to avoid the substance.

Example of patch testing



image courtesy of Dermnet

Where can I get more information

DermNet

https://dermnetnz.org/topics/allergic-contact-dermatitis

https://dermnetnz.org/topics/patch-tests

British Association of Dermatologists

https://cdn.bad.org.uk/uploads/2021/12/29200254/BAD-BSCA-Patch-Testing-update-June-2020-lay-reviewed-April-2020.pdf

Eczema Society

https://eczema.org/information-and-advice/types-of-eczema/contact-dermatitis/

Reference: This patient information leaflet was adapted from the British Association of Dermatologists'

Patient information leaflet:
British Association of Dermatologists (2020) Patch testing.

Available at:
https://cdn.bad.org.uk/uploads/2021/12/29200254/BAD-BSCA-Patch-Testing-update-June-2020-lay-reviewed-April-2020.pdf

There may be students and observers present during your consultation as part of their ongoing training. Please let the staff know if you do not wish any students to be present during your attendance

Please ask a member of staff if you would like a chaperone present during your procedure.

Whiston Hospital
Warrington Road
Prescot
Merseyside
L35 5DR

St Helens Hospital
Marshall Cross Road
St Helens
Merseyside
WA9 3DA

Newton Hospital
Bradlegh Road
Newton-le-Willows
WA12 8RB

Southport Hospital
Town Lane Kew
Southport
Merseyside
PR8 6PN

Ormskirk Hospital
Dicconson Way
Wigan Road
Ormskirk
L39 2AZ

MWL has a zero-tolerance approach to any form of abuse, violence or aggression shown to staff and patients, by patients, visitors or members of the public. We will not tolerate any form of bullying, victimisation, harassment, discrimination, unacceptable and inappropriate behaviour and/or unacceptable and inappropriate language.

All instances of abuse, violence or aggression, no matter how big or small, will be investigated and action taken if necessary.