

## 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 for three days (72 hours) prior to your appointment, as these will interfere with the testing, possibly leading to inaccurate results.

Do not apply any cream or lotion to the test site (the arms or back) for 24 hours before your test.

**Note:** Do not discontinue any other oral treatment you may be taking, including asthma medication; continue these as prescribed. If you are taking beta-blockers or tricyclic antidepressants, please discuss with your doctor before having the test. If you are pregnant or may be pregnant, please discuss alternative testing with your doctor.

A referral form must be completed by the requestor – when this has been approved you will be phoned for an appointment.

**Note: Infants under the age of 18 months will not be tested (unless consultation and prior approval by a pathologist).**

If you have difficulty speaking or understanding English, please bring someone along with you as your interpreter.

The test will take approximately 30 minutes to complete.

Testing is performed by applying a range of small drops of fluid (allergens) to the skin and a prick is made through the drop before it is blotted away. Included within the range is a drop of fluid we expect all patients to react to (histamine positive control) 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 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, e.g. 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 you have any concerns after the testing, **please contact your GP immediately.**

*Your results can only be obtained from the requesting doctor*

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

Waikato  
07 858 0799

Bay of Plenty  
07 578 7073

Whakatane  
07 306 0906

Rotorua  
07 348 2106

Taupo  
07 376 5103  
07 376 1045