

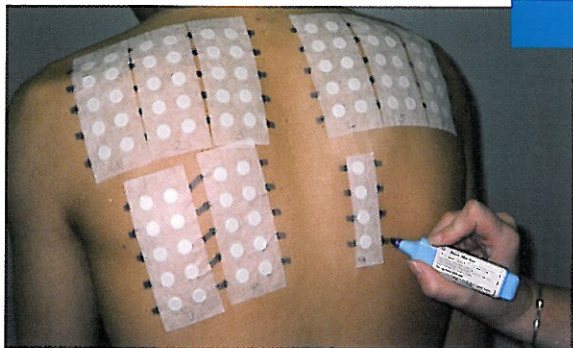
ABOUT PATCH TESTING

What is patch testing?

Patch testing is a process used to detect whether someone has allergic contact dermatitis to something they contact at home or at work. During patch testing, small amounts of chemicals or substances that are used at home or at work are diluted and placed onto discs which are mounted on hypoallergenic tape and then placed on the back.

Patch testing does not test for food allergies. **If we find a relevant allergen, we may be able to cure your skin problem.**

EXAMPLE OF PATCH TESTING.



How many patches?

The number of patches applied is specific to each individual. There are 10 discs on each patch. Some people have 5-10 patches or sometimes even more.

Why the back?

The back is used for patch testing because it has lots of room to put the patches. This also gives people the opportunity to have a bath, as the patches must be kept dry during the testing. Showers must be avoided for the length of the testing.

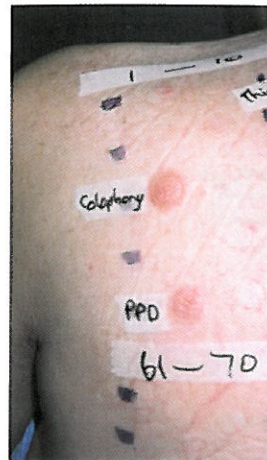
Preparation for testing

- If your doctor has given you cortisone/prednisolone tablets for your skin condition, please call us for advice. Generally cortisone/prednisolone tablets should not be taken 48 hours before testing.
- Shower the morning of the tests, as you **cannot get your back wet** from the time the patches go on until the time you see the dermatologist for your **third** appointment.
- Men with hair on their backs should shave or wax it off a day or two before testing (do not use chemical hair removal products).
- Do not put any creams or oils on your back the morning of the testing.
- Do not get your back exposed to sunlight for days prior to testing. It is thought sunlight before testing may reduce the immune response of the skin.
- During testing, **sweating must be avoided** as patches could fall off. If you are working in a job where you get hot and sweaty, please call us for advice. Physical activity or playing sports during tested is also strongly discouraged.

What does an allergic reaction look like?

Once the patches are taken off, the dermatologist looks for any red raised spots that may have appeared. These are normally the size of a 5 cent coin and appear where the discs were placed. They are usually itchy.

EXAMPLE OF POSITIVE PATCH TEST REACTIONS.



Interpretation of patch tests requires considerable skill. Not all positive tests are relevant so that it is necessary for the dermatologist to interpret the meaning of the reaction.

If this testing is negative, it may indicate that you have a different condition such as irritant contact dermatitis, eczema or contact urticaria (another form of testing known as prick testing or a blood test is used to diagnose this condition).

If you develop redness, swelling or blisters after your last visit, it may mean that you have a late reaction. Please ring the Foundation.

What to bring to the appointment?

Bring everything which is in contact with your damaged skin. We may test up to 20 products.

These might include:

- Products used on your skin (bring in its original container), even if you don't think it is causing any problems e.g. moisturisers, hand cleansers, cosmetics (including nail polish).
- Products specific to the area of skin affected e.g. gloves if you have hand dermatitis, or shoes and socks if your feet are affected.
- Work samples- either bring them in their original container if not too big, or put a small sample amount into individual screw top glass container and label.
- Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for all products and chemicals you come into contact with in the workplace. You should be able to get these from your OHS representative, union official, supervisor or employer. It is compulsory for the workplace to supply these.

While we may not necessarily test all of these substances, we would like to see them and assess their relevance. **You will be required to bring these items to all three appointments.**