

# Allergy patch tests

## Information for Patients

Patch tests, also commonly referred to as “epicutaneous tests”, are performed to detect contact allergies, such as allergies to medications or chemical compounds. Patch tests help quickly and accurately diagnose allergic contact dermatitis (a type of eczema caused by direct skin contact with an allergen).

**Patch tests are performed by dermatologist or allergologist to identify sensitivity to environmental allergens such as:**

- Nickel sulfates - found in jewelry, clothing items (e.g., buckles, buttons), kitchen utensils, door handles, scissors.
- **Sterol alcohols from lanolin** – found in cosmetics such as creams, shampoos, and makeup foundations.
- Neomycin sulfates - present in antibiotics, eye drops and ointments, aerosols.
- Rosin (colophony) - used in the production of cosmetics, varnishes, chewing gums.
- Formaldehydes - found in paints, cleaning agents, cosmetics, and construction materials.

### How to prepare for the patch tests?

- Patient must be healthy (with no active infection).
- At least 4 weeks passed since the last occurrence of eczema at the test site.
- At least 2 weeks passed since the last antibiotic dose.
- At least 4 weeks passed since the last UV exposure (sun, tanning beds, phototherapy, occupational exposure).
- **Stop using any topical corticosteroids or allergy medications applied to the skin** at least **2 weeks** before the test.
- **Discontinue oral antiallergic medications, including antihistamines**, 7–10 days before testing.
- **Do not take calcium supplements, vitamin C, or rutin** for 2–3 days before the test.
- **Shave the upper back area** 1–2 days before the test (for patients with excessive hair), as the patches will be applied directly to the skin. The skin must be smooth and hair-free to avoid irritation and ensure accurate results.

**The test patches are applied directly to the skin, so to avoid irritation, the skin must be smooth and hair-free.**

### On the day of the examination:

- Do not apply skincare products such as lotions, creams, or ointments on the skin. These may interfere with the adhesion of the test patches.
- After the tests are applied, be careful not to get the back wet during bathing, as the tests are placed there. Water reduces the patches’ adhesion and may cause them to come off.
- During the test period, wear loose, breathable, and dark outer clothing. Avoid wearing bras or corsets. Tight-fitting clothing can damage the patches, and some substances in the tests may also stain clothing.
- It is recommended to limit physical activity during the test period. Excessive sweating can cause the patches to peel off.

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### Performance and reading results of allergic patch tests

Patch tests are performed by a dermatologist during a medical consultation. A patch test, consisting of individual chambers filled with test substances, is applied to the patient's cleaned skin—most commonly on the back.

The patch remains on the patient's skin for 48 hours from the time of application to allow for the interpretation of the initial results. A second reading takes place 96 hours after the chambers with haptens are applied to the patient's skin.

### The contraindications for the procedure:

- Poor general health condition of the patient and their age — patch tests are recommended for adults and children over 6 years old.
- Tests should not be performed during an acute allergic reaction.
- Tests are not performed during an acute infectious disease with fever.
- Tests are not performed in patients with autoimmune diseases or cancer.
- Tests cannot be performed on individuals with extensive skin conditions where it is not possible to apply the test patches.
- Patch tests cannot be performed on pregnant or breastfeeding women.