

Skin prick tests

Information for Patients

Skin prick tests are performed to diagnose allergies to airborne and food allergens.

How to prepare?

- **Tests are not performed during infections.** You should come for testing at least 4–7 days after the infection has resolved.
- **Tests are not performed during flare-ups of allergic reactions** (especially if asthma is uncontrolled, or if you experience shortness of breath, severe coughing, runny nose, or watery eyes), or during pollen seasons if you are likely allergic to specific plants.
- Do not apply any creams or lotions to the skin of your forearms on the day of the test.

Medications

Unless otherwise advised by the referring physician, the following medications need to be discontinued:

- oral antiallergic drugs (antihistamines) – 7–10 days before the test,
- tricyclic and tetracyclic antidepressants (amitriptyline, desipramine, doxepin) – at least 14 days before the test,
- glucocorticoids (taken orally or by injection) – 1–3 weeks before the test (always follow your doctor's instructions),
- topical glucocorticoids, calcineurin inhibitors and antihistamine creams or gels (on the forearm skin) 1–2 weeks before the test (as directed by your doctor).
- 4 days before the test, do not use oral antileukotrienes (e.g. Montelukast, Singulair, Astmodil),
- **You may continue using** eye drops, nasal sprays, and inhaled medications, as they do not affect the results of skin prick testing.

Procedure:

The tests involve applying drops of control solutions and suspected allergens to the inner side of the forearm. A special „lancet” or fine injection needle is then used to introduce the allergen into the outer skin layer (epidermis). 15–20 minutes after the application, the allergens are removed from the skin using a sterile gauze pad. The test results are then read.

Contraindications:

- Tests cannot be performed within 6 weeks of an anaphylactic reaction.
- Tests should not be performed on areas of skin lesions on the forearms.
- Skin tests should not be performed earlier than 7–10 days after discontinuation of oral glucocorticosteroids.
- Tests cannot be performed earlier than 4 weeks after parenteral administration of glucocorticosteroids (e.g. intramuscularly or intra-articularly).
- The presence of extensive tattoos is a contraindication for performing the tests.
- If a patient is taking psychiatric drugs, consultation with both an allergist and a psychiatrist is required prior to qualification, to assess the possibility of discontinuing these medications.