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Skin Testing

Skin tests are methods of testing for allergic antibodies. A test consists of introducing small amounts of the suspected substance or allergen, into the skin and noting the development of a positive reaction (which consists of a wheal, swelling or flare in the surrounding area of redness). The results are read at 15 to 20 minutes after the application of the allergen. The skin test methods are:

Prick Method: The skin is pricked with a needle where a drop of allergen has already been placed.

Intradermal Method: This method consists of injecting small amounts of an allergen into the superficial layers of the skin.

Interpreting the clinical significance of skin tests requires skillful correlation of the test results with the patient's clinical history. Positive tests indicate the presence of allergic antibodies and are not necessarily correlated with clinical symptoms.

You will be tested to important (location) airborne allergens and possibly some foods. These include, trees, grasses, weeds, molds, dust mites, animal danders and possibly some foods. The skin testing generally takes 45 minutes. Prick (also known as percutaneous) tests are usually performed on your back but may also be performed on your arms. Intradermal skin tests may be performed if the prick skin tests are negative and are performed on your arms. If you have a specific allergic sensitivity to one of the allergens, a red, raised, itchy bump (caused by histamine release into the skin) will appear on your skin within 15 to 20 minutes. These positive reactions will gradually disappear over a period of 30 to 60 minutes, and, typically, no treatment is necessary for this itchiness. Occasionally local swelling at a test site will begin 4 to 8 hours after the skin tests are applied, particularly at sites of intradermal testing. These reactions are not serious and will disappear over the next week or so. They should be measured and reported to your physician at your next visit. You may be scheduled for skin testing to antibiotics, caines, venoms, or other biological agents. The same guidelines apply.

DO NOT:

1. No prescription or over the counter oral antihistamines should be used **3 days** prior to scheduled skin testing. These include cold tablets, sinus tablets, hay fever medications or oral treatments for itchy skin, over the counter allergy medications such as Claritin, Zyrtec, Allegra, Actifed, Dimetapp, Benedryl and many others. Prescription antihistamines such as Clarinex and Xyzal should also be stopped at least **3 days** prior to testing. If you have any questions whether or not you are using an antihistamine, please ask our office. In some instances a longer period of time off these medications may be necessary.
2. You should discontinue your nasal and eye antihistamine medications such as Patanase, Pataday, Astepro, Optivar, Dymista or Astelin at least **2 days** before the testing. In some instances a longer period of time off these medications may be necessary. If you have any questions whether or not you are using an antihistamine, please ask our office.
3. You should discontinue antacids such as Pepcid and Zantac at least **3 days** prior to testing.
4. Medications such as over the counter sleeping medications (Tylenol PM and Advil PM) and other prescribed drugs, such as amitriptyline hydrochloride (Elavil), hydroxyzine (Atarax), doxepin (Sinequan), and imipramine (Tofranil) have antihistaminic activity and should be discontinued at least 2 weeks prior to receiving skin test after consultation with your physician. Please make the office aware that you are taking these medications so you may be advised as to how long prior to testing you should stop taking them.

YOU MAY

1. You may continue to use your intranasal allergy sprays such as Flonase Rhinocort, Nasonex, Nasacort, Omnaris, Veramyst and Nasarel.
2. Asthma inhalers (inhaled steroids and bronchodilators), leukotriene antagonist s (e.g. Singulair, Accolate) and oral theophylline (Theo-Dur, T-Phyl, Uniphyll, Theo-24, etc.) do not interfere with skin testing and should be used as prescribed.
3. You may continue to take antacids such as Prilosec, Nexium and Prevacid.

******If you are uncertain about any medication you are taking and whether you should discontinue prior to testing, please send a message to us through the portal.**

Medications that need to be stopped prior to skin testing:

Advil PM – 3 days
Allegra (fexofenadine) – 3 days
Astelin (azelastine) – 2 days
Astepro (azelastine) – 2 days
Atarax (hydroxyzine)
Benadryl (diphenhydramine) – 3 days
Chlor-Trimeton (chlorpheniramine) – 3 days
Clarinox (desloratadine) – 3 days
Claritin or Alavert (loratadine) – 3 days
Dimetapp (brompheniramine) – 3 days
Dymista – 2 days
Optivar (azelastine) – 2 days
OTC antihistamines, cough syrups, sleep aids and anti-nausea medication – 3 days
Pataday (olopatadine) – 2 days
Patanase (olopatadine HCL) – 2 days
Pepcid (famotidine) – 3 days
Tagamet – 3 days
Tylenol PM – 3 days
Xyzal (levocetirizine) – 3 days
Zantac (ranitidine) – 3 days
Zyrtec (cetirizine) – 3 days

Medications that do not interfere with skin testing and may be taken:

Accolate
All asthma inhalers
Flonase
Nasarel
Nasocort
Nasonex
Nexium
Omeprazole
Omnaris
Oral Theophylline
Prednisone
Prevacid
Prilosec
Protonix
Singulair
Veramyst