

# Tidewater Allergy and Asthma

## Skin Testing: Patient Information and Instructions

Skin Tests are used to test for the presence of allergic antibodies and can help identify the allergens responsible for allergic reactions in the patient's environment. The most often used method of Skin Testing is the Prick Method, and this occurs either on the upper arm or back. With this method, the surface of the skin is pricked by a small needle that contains a small amount of the suspected allergen. The skin is then observed after 15 to 30 minutes, noting the development of any positive reactions.

In some cases, negative prick testing results may be followed by intradermal (ID) testing in the upper arm. During intradermal testing, an injection of a more dilute allergen solution is injected directly under the surface of the skin, and again evaluated for positive reactions. Your doctor will discuss this with you if he/she deems this testing necessary.

### **Allergens Tested:**

With skin testing, you may be tested for airborne allergens (e.g., tree, grass, or weed pollens, molds, dust mites, and animal dander), insect venoms, and/or medications (e.g., penicillins, biologics). Foods should not be tested intradermally. Similarly, chemicals causing rashes should not be tested with prick or intradermal testing either.

### **Reactions and Interpretation of Results:**

If you have a specific allergic sensitivity to one of the tested allergens, a positive reaction will appear on your skin within 15-20 minutes. It may consist of a pink or red raised itchy bump, wheal, swelling, or a flare in the surrounding area of redness. This is caused as your body releases histamine into the skin, so it should appear similar to the histamine control prick that was also performed during the initial skin test. The reaction will itch at the site of the test and typically resolve within an hour after testing. Usually, no treatment is required for this.

Occasionally, local swelling may appear at the test site 4-8 hours after an intradermal test, but this does not usually happen with prick tests. These reactions are not serious and will usually disappear within a week. Large reactions may form a delayed response with persistence of the reaction or soreness that may last for a few days. The latter are not relevant for determination of allergies. Very rarely can a systemic allergic reaction occur that may vary from aggravation of rhinitis to even more rarely, anaphylaxis.

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 may not necessarily correlate with clinical symptoms. After skin testing, you will consult with Dr. Jeremy Owens or Christina Barnett, FNP-C who will make further recommendations regarding your treatment.

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## Location of Testing and Staffing:

Skin testing will be administered at Tidewater Allergy and Asthma with a medical physician or other health care professional present since occasional mild or very rare severe reactions may require immediate therapy. Talk to your doctor about any further details. Please let the physician and nurse know if you are pregnant. Allergy skin testing may be postponed until after the pregnancy in the unlikely event of a reaction to the allergy testing (the exception is testing for penicillin/ampicillin allergy and subsequent oral challenge to amoxicillin).

**Medications to Avoid Prior to Testing:** Because reactions that occur rely on histamine to detect an allergen, antihistamines and certain other medications should be stopped prior to testing. Please see the list below for guidance related to medications.

Stop Taking Before Appt 14 Days	Stop Taking Before Appt 7 Days	Stop Taking Before Appt 5 Days
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Periactin (cyproheptadine)</li><li>Remeron (mirtazapine)</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Claritin (loratadine)</li><li>Alavert (loratadine)</li><li>Claritin (desloratadine)</li><li>Topical steroids on the back</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Allegra (fexofenadine)</li><li>Zyrtec (cetirizine)</li><li>Xyzal (levocetirizine)</li><li>ChlorTrimeton</li><li>(chlorpheniramine)</li><li>Antivert (meclizine)</li></ul>
Stop Taking Before Appt 3 Days	The following medications can be continued:	Please continue all asthma inhalers and other health maintenance medications such as blood pressure, birth control, and diabetes drugs.  Some nausea, sleep, depression, and mood medications can interfere with skin testing, but it is not recommended to stop those.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Benadryl (diphenhydramine)</li><li>Atarax or Vistaril (hydroxyzine)</li><li>Astelin (azelastine) nasal spray</li><li>Patanase (olopatadine)</li><li>Allergy eye drops</li><li>Over the counter cold and cough medicines</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Singulair (montelukast)</li><li>Flonase (fluticasone) and other nasal steroids</li><li>Sudafed (pseudoephedrine)</li><li>Afrin (oxymetazoline) can be used up to 3 days at a time</li><li>Oral steroid (prednisone)</li><li>Pepcid (famotidine)</li><li>Prilosec (omeprazole)</li><li>Protonix (pantoprazole)</li><li>Nexium (esomeprazole)</li></ul>	

**Appointment Cancellation:** Please do not cancel your appointment. The time set aside for your skin test is exclusively yours and special allergens are prepared for it. If for any reason you need to change your skin test appointment, please give us at least 48-hour notice. Due to the length of time scheduled for skin testing, a last-minute change results in a loss of valuable time that another patient might have utilized. If the office visit is cancelled without this 48-hour advance notice, a \$50 cancellation fee will be charged to the patient. This will not be covered by insurance. Placing a credit card on file is required to reserve the skin testing appointment.

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## Skin Testing: Patient Consent Form

I \_\_\_\_\_ (name of patient) am in agreement with my provider at

Tidewater Allergy and Asthma to do testing as deemed medically necessary.

I understand there is an additional fee charge for this service. I also understand insurance will be billed for this service (if I have insurance) and I will be responsible for my copay, deductible, and/or any other amount not paid by my insurance.

Printed Name of Patient: \_\_\_\_\_

Patient's DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of person completing this form (if not patient): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Today's Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_

### **Will My Insurance Cover Skin Testing?**

Insurance is a contract between the patient and the health insurance company, and our office only charges what is dictated by the insurance. As such, please call your insurance company to check on coverage. They determine the price and it is beneficial for you to ask them about the following codes:

- 95004 (skin prick/percutaneous allergy test)
- 95024 (intradermal/intracutaneous allergy test).
- Insurance may ask you for the requested number of units: up to 59 units total for 95004, and up to 10 units for 95024, if needed.

Maximum out of pocket cost for prick test without insurance (if doing 59 units): \$6.50 per prick x 59= \$383.50

Maximum out of pocket cost for intradermal testing without insurance: \$9 per test X 10 = \$90

If you have insurance, you will be charged the "allowable rate" which is determined by your insurance company, and which may be less than what is listed above. If you are required to pay co-insurance, you will pay a portion of the "allowable rate." If you have not met your deductible, you will be responsible for the full cost/allowable rate until your deductible is met, but please contact your insurance company to confirm.