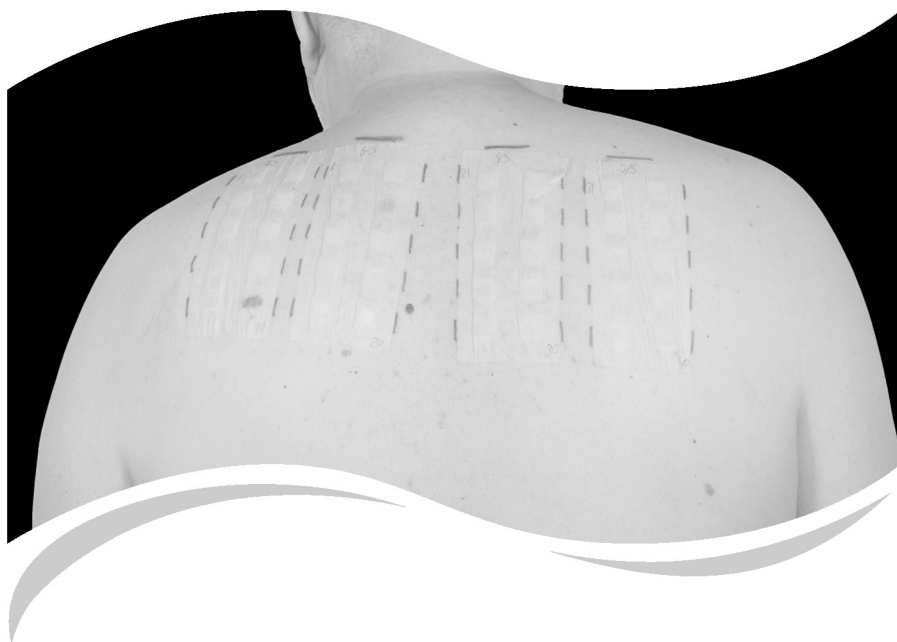




Contact allergy testing (Patch Testing)

Information for patients
Dermatology department



IMPORTANT POINTS

PLEASE READ CAREFULLY BEFORE YOUR APPOINTMENT

Please read this entire information sheet carefully, but particularly note the following:

We may have to delay your patch testing if:

- ❖ Your back has been exposed to the sun/sunbeds/light treatment within the last 8 weeks and/or your back is deeply tanned
- ❖ Your skin rash is very active
- ❖ If you have been prescribed any immunosuppressant medication such as prednisolone, methotrexate, ciclosporin etc in the last 8 weeks please contact Dermatology prior to attending on the number below

If you are in any doubt please contact the Dermatology Day Unit (01236 712618) for advice.

On the day of your appointment:

Wear very dark or old clothing including your bra. We must mark your back with a pen which permanently stains clothing.

We will arrange appointments for Wednesday and Friday of the same week and any other subsequent appointments but we cannot guarantee the same time as your Monday appointment.

WHAT IS PATCH TESTING?

Patch testing is a test that can help your doctor/nurse determine whether your skin condition is caused or made worse by allergy to substances in contact with your skin. Such substances may be found at home, at work, or in leisure activities.

The testing does not detect allergies related to diet or inhalation, such as might produce rhinitis (sneezing or runny nose), asthma (wheezing) or urticaria (wheals or hives).

TO WHAT WILL I BE TESTED?

You will be tested to around 50 standard substances commonly in contact with the skin, e.g. rubber chemicals, metals, perfumes and plants. You may also be tested to additional substances depending on your skin problem.

It is helpful to do this test, even if your skin condition is not active currently.

WHAT DOES PATCH TESTING INVOLVE?

You will need to attend the hospital on three occasions on Monday, Wednesday and Friday of the same week. Further visits may be required. Allow up to 1 hour for each clinic appointment, although the visits are often shorter than this.

- ❖ Monday: The nurse will apply the patches as directed/ prescribed by your doctor. A number of small plastic discs which contain the test substances will be taped on to your skin (usually the back, occasionally upper arms), using hypoallergenic tape. Please let us know if you have had any previous reactions to tape/plaster.

**These discs must stay on your back until Wednesday.
If you are on antihistamines, you can continue taking them.**



**Ink is used to mark the tests and this can stain clothing.
It is therefore advisable to wear an old dark top.**

- ❖ **Wednesday:** You should remove the tape at least 1 hour before your appointment. Your skin will be assessed to see if there are any reactions at this stage. Staining of the skin may occur due to the substances applied.
- ❖ **Friday:** Final reading will be taken and information leaflets given on any allergies discovered. You will either be reviewed by the doctor on the Friday or as soon as possible after the Friday appointment. Your allergies will then be discussed and their relevance to your current skin problem and further management of your condition. Negative patch tests are still helpful as we can, eliminate contact allergy as a cause of your skin problem. You may be referred back to a dermatology clinic.

It is important that you attend, even if there are no red areas, so that your results can be fully documented.

WHAT SHOULD I BRING TO THE PATCH TEST CLINIC?

You may bring anything that you think might be important, along with all your skin treatments (remember those bought over the counter as well as prescribed) to the first clinic appointment.

IS THERE ANYTHING I SHOULD AVOID?

The test sites must remain dry until after the final readings - avoid showers - have a shallow cool bath or wash down with a flannel.

Strenuous exertion, for example sports or heavy physical work should be avoided so that the tests remain in place. Be careful when dressing/undressing when the back muscles are being stretched, to lessen the chances of patches loosening. You should avoid exposure of your back to sunshine/sunbeds.

WE WILL NOT DO PATCH TESTING IF:

- ❖ You are pregnant or breast feeding
- ❖ You are unable to attend all appointments

WE MAY DECIDE AGAINST PATCH TESTING IF:

- ❖ You have over exposure to ultraviolet radiation (including sun bed use and foreign holiday) in the 8 weeks prior to testing
- ❖ Your skin rash is too active on the patch test site
- ❖ You are on a high dose of steroid pills

If any of these apply, please phone and re-arrange your appointment.

Telephone 01236 712618.

WHAT SIDE EFFECTS MAY OCCUR?

- ❖ Skin reddening and itching: may result from positive test results and usually disappears after a few days, although occasionally a significant reaction may lead to blistering.
- ❖ Persistent reaction: some positive test reactions e.g. to gold, may persist for up to a month
- ❖ Flare of eczema: a positive patch test may be accompanied by a flare of existing or previous eczema
- ❖ Pigmentary change: an increase or decrease in pigment may be seen at the site of patch tests, which may last for months or rarely (1 in 1000) permanently.
- ❖ Infection is rare and may need antibiotic treatment
- ❖ Scarring very rare (1 in 10,000)
- ❖ Allergy: very rarely, about 1 in 5000 patch tests, you may become allergic to one of the substances applied during patch testing. In practice this does not seem to cause a problem in the long term.
- ❖ Delayed reaction: Occasionally a reaction may occur after the final Friday reading. If this happens, please contact the Dermatology department.

The medical and nursing staff will be pleased to answer any questions that you may have about patch testing during your hospital visits.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND THE USE OF PATIENT INFORMATION

NHS Lanarkshire take care to ensure your personal information is only accessible to authorised people. Our staff have a legal and contractual duty to keep personal health information secure, and confidential. In order to find out more about current data protection legislation and how we process your information, please visit the Data Protection Notice on our website at www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk or ask a member of staff for a copy of our Data Protection Notice.

University Hospital Hairmyres
East Kilbride G75 8RG
Telephone 01355 585000

University Hospital Monklands
Monkscourt Avenue
Airdrie ML6 0JS
Telephone 01236 748748

University Hospital Wishaw
50 Netherton Street
Wishaw ML2 0DP
Telephone 01698 361100

NHS Lanarkshire - for local services and the latest health news visit www.nhslanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk
NHS Lanarkshire General
Enquiry Line: 0300 30 30 243

NHS inform - The national health information service for Scotland.
www.nhsinform.co.uk
Tel No: 0800 22 44 88

If you need this information in another language or format, please e-mail: Translation.
Services@lanarkshire.scot.nhs.uk



www.careopinion.org.uk

Pub. date:	May 2021
Review date:	May 2023
Issue No:	07
Dept:	Dermatology Dept
Clinical Lead:	

PIL.PATCHT.50438.M
21_08144