

Patch Testing

Allergy Testing

How is Type IV (delayed) Allergy tested?

Testing can be performed by Allergy Patch Testing.

Who performs the testing?

A Dermatologist or Medical Specialist trained to diagnose and treat skin disorders can complete a detailed assessment and interpret the results.

Who is tested?

People experiencing dermatitis with suspected contact allergy to a substance including chemicals (such as accelerators), metals, sunscreens, dyes, cosmetics and creams.

Which allergens are tested?

A person's detailed clinical history including symptoms will determine which allergens will be tested, as well as a standard baseline series. This history will include information about products that the person has been in contact with both at work and at home, including hobbies. The dermatologist may also ask the patient to bring to all their cosmetic and cream products, gloves, shoes and a detailed list of chemical products used to the appointment.

Patch Testing

Due to the large number of allergens tested and the length of time the patches remain, this test is usually performed on the

patient's back. Patches can only be applied to unaffected skin. It is recommended to avoid sun exposure up to 5 days prior to testing, as UV radiation may reduce the immune response. Additionally for up to 7 days prior, the patient should avoid topical steroid creams to the back.

Once applied, the patches will be left intact for 48 hours. Patients are not permitted to shower during this time, and it is recommended they avoid any activity that may result in the patches lifting due to excessive sweating and/or movement. The patient then returns and the specialist removes the patches and the patient's reactions are inspected and marked. The back is then left exposed, and patients may shower, but must avoid scrubbing the back as the markings may be removed. A second reading is performed after a total of 72 to 96 hours after the initial patches were placed, and the results are discussed with the patient.

If there is a significant reaction i.e. active dermatitis is present, a topical steroid may be prescribed to reduce itching at the patch site.



Reference

The Australasian College of Dermatologists (ACD). Allergy patch testing. <https://www.dermcoll.edu.au/atoz/allergy-patch-testing/> Accessed 15/08/2016

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