

Patch Testing

Allergic contact dermatitis is characterized by a rash that occurs when substances to which you are allergic come in contact with your skin. These substances could be an ingredient in cosmetics, clothing, ointments, soaps, shampoos, shaving gels, jewelry, tools, newspapers, fabric dyes, etc. This type of allergy is often hard to recognize as it may take a few days for your skin to react after being exposed to the allergen—this is called delayed-type hypersensitivity.

A patch test assesses if you are allergic to any of the most common causes of contact dermatitis. Patch testing is done at our office on Mondays or Wednesdays and it takes about 20 minutes to apply the patches on the back (and sometimes the upper arms). The patches are worn for 48 hours and must be kept dry. When bathing, be careful not to get the patches or the surrounding area wet. Avoid activities that may cause you to sweat. If the patches loosen for any reason, immediately reattach with hypoallergenic adhesive tape or call us.

You will return to the office 2 days after the patches were applied for patch removal and for the initial reading. The test area will be outlined with a skin marker. You may now get your back (and arms) wet. Please do not wash the outlined areas. Do not use any lotions or creams on the test areas.

The final reading is done 2-3 days later. If any allergies are found, you will be given information on how to identify and avoid them.

Please let us know if you are on steroids by mouth. If you have any questions or concerns, please call (334) 528-0078.

Thank you,

Dr. John W. Tole
Board-Certified Allergy, Asthma, and Clinical Immunology