



Skin test

Test to determine if you have an allergic reaction

You will soon be undergoing a skin test. This test is used to check if you have any allergies. This folder explains how the skin test is carried out, the side effects and which medication you should stop using before the test.

An allergy

There are different types of allergic reactions. The most common reaction is the type I allergic reaction (the immediate reaction). The body produces antibodies when you come into contact with a substance you are allergic to. This causes a severe reaction that develops within a few minutes. Occasionally, a reaction will only develop after an hour or more.

The substances you are allergic to are called allergens. Allergens can be found in the air (e.g. dust mites, pollen, animal dander and mould), in food, medicines and insect poisons.

An example of a type I allergy is hay fever. Examples of symptoms that may occur with a type I reaction are:

- hives
- swelling
- irritation in the mouth and throat
- blocked or runny nose
- red, irritated eyes
- stomach cramps
- nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea
- shock

The purpose of the skin test

The skin test is the most common test for type I allergies. The purpose of the test is to cause an allergic reaction in the skin.

During the test, the allergen drop (the substance you may be allergic to) is put upon your skin. If there is an allergic reaction in the skin, it may become red and swollen at the drop site.

With the results of the skin test, the doctor determines what you may be allergic to.

Preparation

Medicine that affects the results

For a proper assessment of the skin test, you must stop taking your allergy medication (i.e. antihistamines taken in tablet or liquid form) on time.

You should stop taking antihistamines **at least 3 days** before the skin test. Examples of antihistamines include:

- clemastine (Tavegil)
- desloratadine (Aerius)
- dimetindine (Fenistil)
- ebastine (Kestine)
- fexofenadine (Telfast)
- hydroxyzine (Atarax/Navicalm)
- ketotifen (Zaditen)
- levocetirizine (Xyzal)
- loratadine (Claritin/Allerfree)
- promethazine (Phenergan)

Body lotion, creams, ointment

Do not apply body lotion, creams or ointments, etc. to your arms on the day of the skin test.

The skin test

A drop of liquid containing the dissolved allergen is applied to your skin. The skin under the drop is then touched. This allows the liquid to be better absorbed into the skin.

Skin reaction

The reaction on the skin is observed and assessed after 20 minutes. If an allergic reaction occurs, you will develop a bump (swelling) with a red spot at drop site. The bump may be itchy. This skin reaction feels a bit like a mosquito bite.

Two additional skin pricks

To check whether the skin test is working properly, you will receive two additional skin tests.

- One with only the solvent of the allergen (without the allergen). This is called a negative control. This should not make your skin red or swollen.
- One with a histamine solution. This is called a positive control. This should make your skin red and swollen. Histamine is a substance that the body produces during an allergic reaction.

Side effects of the skin test

Reaction elsewhere in the body

A reaction to the test elsewhere in the body is rare, because very little of the allergen is used.

Itching

You may experience itching at the drop site. In the case of a strong allergy, an itchy bump may reappear at the prick site of the test after 6 hours. It will disappear in a few days.

Sneezing, itchy eyes, shortness of breath or other symptoms

If you experience sneezing, itchy eyes, shortness of breath or other symptoms during or after the skin test, please let us know straight away. The doctor can treat these symptoms immediately.

Playing, going to school, studying

After the skin test, you can continue with your usual daily activities.

Questions

If you have any questions after this test, please call the Paediatric Outpatient Clinic +31 23 224 0070.

More information

Also watch the KidsStrip about the Spaarne Gasthuis skin test on YouTube: <https://kids.spaarnegasthuis.nl/7-11-jaar/kidsstrips> -> huidtest

Waar zijn we te vinden?

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