

# Patch Test

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Patch testing is done to test for a skin allergy to substances that come in contact with your skin. Your skin can become allergic to nearly anything, but there are a relatively small number of compounds to which people commonly become allergic.

## What to expect:

- The test takes several days!
- On the first day, several test strips are applied to the skin, usually the back. For any patients with lots of hair on the back, it helps if you shave the back the day before patches are applied. Then the tape will stick.
- For the next two days **you must not get this area wet!** Getting the strips wet will cause them to lift off the skin, invalidating the test. **This means you cannot take a shower for the first two days of the test.** Also, vigorous activities that make you sweat **MUST** be avoided.
- Two days after the test strips are applied, you return to the office to have them removed, and the area covered by the strips is evaluated for any allergic reaction.
- Allergic reactions commonly take 2–4 days before they can be seen, so you have to come back a third time, usually 4 days after the strips were applied.
- Between the second and fourth day you **ARE** allowed to shower, but you should not apply soap to the back, and you should not immerse your back in water.

## Please note:

Your patch test is set up by hand especially for you on the day of your first patch test visit, usually before you arrive. This has a cost in time and money. If you do not show up for a scheduled patch test, you will be billed a \$50 fee that insurance will not cover!

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9/28/2017 Revised