

# DERMATOLOGY — & Skin Health —

## PATCH TESTING

### What is Patch Testing and why do we do it?

**Patch Testing** is a main tool used to determine the cause or diagnosis of allergic contact dermatitis.

Successful treatment of dermatitis symptoms depends on *accurate diagnosis*.

No treatment works very well as long as *Allergen exposure is continuing*.

**Anything** can be potential “allergen”. An allergen, is any material, product or ingredient, that when exposed to, may cause an allergic reaction.

### Important Consideration when planning and scheduling you Patch Testing:

*3 separate appointments* will be required within a one week period; Monday, Wednesday and Friday

**Monday**, the first appointment will be the day your patch test strips are applied, the back is the usual site used. You cannot shower once your patch test strips have been applied. Please shower **Before** your appointment, and **Do Not apply any creams or lotions** to your back.

**Wednesday**, the second appointment is scheduled 48 hours, or 2 days after the application. The patch test strips will be removed and an initial evaluation of your skins response will be recorded. At this point you will be allowed to shower, however it is **very important to allow the shower water to spray directly on the test area, No scrubbing or rubbing the skin when washing or drying the test area.**

**Friday**, the third appointment us scheduled 96 hours, or 4 days after the application. This is the time when **final interpretation of your test results** will be performed, and discussed with you.

# DERMATOLOGY

— & Skin Health —

## Patch Testing/Patient Questions:

*“But I didn’t change anything I use before the rash started”*

Everyone born with a unique immune system that will react to certain substances if it is exposed to them enough times. You can use things without a problem until you hit that **“Magic Number”**; the number of times you are exposed to an allergen which causes you to develop an allergy.

*“I’ve changed everything I use since this started”*

Most types of products are made using similar ingredients, so even if you change shampoo or moisturizer several times, unless you know exactly which ingredients you’re trying to avoid, you probably won’t avoid the one’s that’s causing the problem.

*“Can I still take my antihistamines while undergoing the patch testing”*

Yes, patients can usually continue their prescribed antihistamines during patch testing; your provider will discuss your medication with you. However, topical steroids and light therapy should be avoided for at least one week prior to your Patch Testing.

*:Are you sure we didn’t miss something? There were a lot of reactions when the strips were removed, that are gone now”*

Many areas of irritation are expected when the tape and strips are removed but most of these don’t mean anything. We wait several hours/days to observe the areas that DO NOT fade. These are the ones that are important, and mean something.

***This is why your follow up appointments are so important to determine your results.***

### ***\*Helpful Note***

In the packaging of products the list of ingredients is often located on the outside of the box or wrapping, not on the item inside; find the list and read before discarding.