

CONTACT DERMATITIS & OCCUPATIONAL DERMATOLOGY PATCH TEST CLINIC

INFORMATION ABOUT APPOINTMENTS

Most patients will need to attend 3 appointments over a 5-day period. In some circumstances this will be extended to a 7-day period.

APPOINTMENT 1: MONDAY

Patients will have a full consultation with the specialist dermatologist, who will decide what needs to be tested. The clinic nurse will then make up specific patches and apply them to your back. **Please allow up to 3hrs for this appointment.**

APPOINTMENT 2: WEDNESDAY

The patches are removed and your back assessed to see if there have been any reactions or 'red spots' where the patches have been applied. **Please allow approximately 1hr for this appointment**

APPOINTMENT 3: FRIDAY

The dermatologist will complete a secondary assessment of your back to see if there have been any additional 'reactions/red spots' showing up where the patches were applied. The dermatologist will then discuss the results and management of your skin condition. **Please allow approximately 1hr for this appointment.**

Please continue to read for IMPORTANT information.

ABOUT PATCH TESTING

WHAT IS PATCH TESTING?

Patch testing is a process used to detect whether someone has allergic contact dermatitis to something they have contacted at home or in their workplace. Allergies can develop at any stage of life.



Patients are tested to a baseline series of allergens in addition to substances that are used at home or work, which are diluted. These are applied to hypoallergenic tape and then placed on the skin on the back and if required the arms. Patch testing is different from prick testing, which is used to investigate hayfever and food allergies. If a relevant allergy is found in the patch testing process, avoidance of the allergen may cure your skin problem.

HOW MANY PATCHES?

The number of patches applied is specific to each individual. There are 10 discs on each patch. Patients usually have between 6-16 patches.

WHY THE BACK?

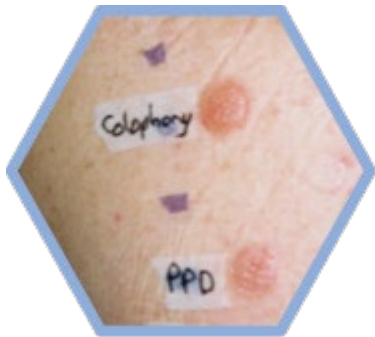
The back is used for patch testing because there is lots of room to put the patches. This also gives people the opportunity to have a shallow bath, as the patches must be kept dry during the testing.

Showers must be avoided for the duration testing.

PREPARATION FOR TESTING

- If your doctor has given you cortisone/prednisolone tablets for your skin condition, please email or call us for advice. Generally, cortisone/prednisolone tablets should not be taken within 48 hours before testing.
- If you have eczema or a rash on your back, it may not be possible to have the patch test performed. Please contact us for advice.
- Please contact the clinic for advice if a large area of your back is covered in tattoos.
- Shower on the morning of the tests, as you cannot get your back wet from the time the patches go on until the time you see the dermatologist for your third appointment.

- Men with hair on their backs should shave or wax it off a day or two before testing (do not use chemical hair removal products). This will aid the patches sticking to the back and also be kinder to you when the patches are removed.
- Do not put any creams or oils on your back on the morning of the testing.
- Do not expose your back to sunlight on or during the week prior to testing. It is thought that sunlight may reduce the immune response of the skin. If your back is sunburnt at the time of your appointments, please call us to discuss.
- During testing, sweating must be avoided as patches could fall off. If you are working in a job where you get hot and sweaty, please call us for advice. Physical activity or playing sports during testing is also strongly discouraged.



WHAT DOES AN ALLERGIC REACTION LOOK LIKE

Once the patches are taken off, the dermatologist assesses any red and raised spots that may have appeared. These are normally the size of a 5-cent coin and appear where the discs were placed. They are usually itchy.

Interpretation of patch tests requires considerable skill. Not all positive tests are relevant, so it is necessary for the dermatologist to interpret the meaning the reactions. If this testing is testing is negative, it may indicate that you have a different condition, such as irritant contact dermatitis, eczema, or contact urticaria. Another form of testing known as prick testing, or a blood test is used to diagnose this condition. If you develop redness, swelling or blisters after your last visit, it may mean that you have a delayed reaction. If this occurs, please take a clear photo of the area and send it through to the Patch Testing Clinic at patchtesting@skinhealthinstitute.org.au

WHAT TO BRING TO THE APPOINTMENT?

Bring everything which is in contact with your damaged skin. We may test up to 20 of your personal products.

These might include:

- Products used on your skin (bring in its original container), even if you don't think it is causing any problems e.g. moisturisers, hand cleansers, cosmetics (including nail polish).
- Products specific to the area of skin affected e.g. gloves if you have hand dermatitis, or shoes and socks if your feet are affected.

- Work samples - either bring them in their original container if not too big, or put a small sample amount into an individual screw top glass container and label.
- Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for all products and chemicals you come into contact with in the workplace. You should be able to get these from your OHS representative, union official, supervisor or employer. It is compulsory for the workplace to supply these.

While we may not necessarily test all of these substances, we would like to see them and assess their relevance. **You will be required to bring these items to all three appointments.**

HOW MUCH WILL PATCH TESTING COST?

The cost of the consultations and patch testing is usually between \$400 and \$900. The Medicare rebate is approximately \$250. The total account must be paid at the conclusion of the last appointment (on the Friday). If blood tests or biopsies are required, additional fees will be billed by the pathology company.

A deposit of **\$400** is required 4 to 6 weeks prior to the commencement of your appointments. If your appointment is scheduled with less than this time available a deposit is required within 48hrs. If the deposit is not paid by the requested time your appointments will be cancelled and offered to other patients.

If you attend your Patch Testing appointments the \$400 will be deducted from the end cost payable after your final appointment

This will also be applicable to WorkCover patients as well and will be refunded at the completion of testing.

If you cancel your appointment with more than 10 business days' notice, you may opt to receive a refund or if rescheduling, the deposit can be held over for the new dates.

IMPORTANT: PLEASE NOTE

Due to high demand for our service **if you cancel you Patch Testing Appointments with 10 or less Business days' notice your deposit of \$400 will not be refunded or transferred** unless you are able to provide a medical certificate for the missed appointments.

We encourage you to reach out to us via email or phone as soon as possible if you need to cancel or reschedule your appointments.

ADDITIONAL PAYMENT INFORMATION

- Pensioners & Health Care Card holders are billed at a reduced rate. Please contact us for more information regarding these fees.
- WorkCover claims. If your skin condition is considered to be work-related, an account may be sent to your employer at the completion of testing. Please bring your employers mailing address details with you.

WHAT PAYMENT METHODS ARE ACCEPTED

EFTPOS, credit cards, cheque and cash are all accepted.

HOW TO MAKE AN APPOINTMENT

After carefully reading the above information if you wish to proceed with booking your 3 appointments please email: patchtesting@skinhealthinstitute.org.au.

In this email, please state your full name and date of birth.

We will respond to your email with the next available appointment dates as soon as we are able.

During peak times this may take up to 7 days.

If you would prefer us to call you to make your appointments, please email to make this request.

Alternatively, you can call 96239402 and leave a message on our answering service. We will return your call as soon as possible.