

Skin prick allergy testing

A member of your medical team has requested for you to have a skin prick allergy test. This request is usually made by a doctor following a recent appointment.

Allergies

An allergy is a disorder that causes an exaggerated immune response within the body when you come into contact with a foreign substance that would usually be harmless in most people. Allergies can lead to a range of symptoms that may affect your breathing, skin or cause swelling in areas of your body that make contact with the allergen.

What is skin prick testing?

Skin prick testing is a diagnostic test for allergic responses or reactions to common allergens such as grass pollen or house dust mites. The skin prick test involves placing drops of allergen onto the forearm, which are then pricked by a small lancet.

The test is usually not considered painful, but may cause some short term itching or redness which usually disappears within four to six hours of the test. Application of anti-histamine cream will help this. If you have a history of anaphylaxis please contact the department prior to the test.

The test should take between 20–30 minutes, but you may need to wait for a short while after the test if you react very badly to the allergens.

Pre-test instructions

Some medications affect the result of this test.

- **Antihistamines should be stopped for at least 48 hours prior to the test**

Please contact the department ahead of your appointment if you take:

- **Beta blockers (bisoprolol, propranolol, atenolol)**
- **Oral steroids (prednisolone)**
- **Tricyclic antidepressants (e.g. amitriptyline, dosulepin)**

Please wear clothing that allows easy access to the forearms. Woollen fibres should be avoided. Please let the physiologist know if you are pregnant, suffer from eczema or are on an immunosuppressant.

Any questions?

If you have any questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact the department to discuss on **0121 371 3870**.

If you require this information in another format, such as a different language, large print, braille or audio version please ask a member of staff or email patientexperience@uhb.nhs.uk.

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