

## Contact Dermatitis: Patch Testing

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Contact dermatitis is a skin condition caused by an allergic reaction to a chemical, medication or other substance in your environment. If your Family Dermatology doctor suspects that you have contact dermatitis, he or she may order a patch test to determine the source of the allergy.

### How it works:

In a patch test, a number of known, common allergens will be taped to your back in small chambers. These will remain in place for 48 hours. When the testing is complete, you will need to come back to the Family Dermatology office so that your doctor can examine your skin and read the results.

### Proper care during patch testing:

- During the 48-hour test period, do not apply any moisturizers or lotions to the area.
- Avoid significant sun exposure.
- Do not get the patches wet. This means you should not bathe or shower.
- Do not perform strenuous work or exercise that could cause excessive sweating. Sweat could cause irritation or might make the patches fall off.
- Although the test area may itch, try not to scratch it. Itching may be an indication of a positive result – a material that you are allergic to – and scratching may alter the test result. If an area becomes extremely sensitive, you can gently remove that specific section of the test strip.
- During testing, do not take any antihistamines or cortisone medications.

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