

PATCH TESTING PATIENT HANDOUT

1. Patch testing is a test used to determine if you have allergic contact dermatitis. Allergic contact dermatitis is due to substances contacting your skin, and then your skin reacts with a rash. Poison ivy or nickel are common causes of allergic contact dermatitis, but there are many other substances which cause contact allergy, including substances in creams, soaps, fragrances, or others. Patch testing is different from prick or scratch testing; prick or scratch testing tests for food allergies and causes of hives.
2. Before patch testing, we generally recommend stopping prednisone and cyclosporine about 2-4 weeks before your test, as determined by your doctor (unless it is determined by your doctor that you should keep taking these medications while getting patch testing).
3. Do not put topical steroid medications (such as mometasone, triamcinolone, clobetasol, betamethasone) on your back 1 week before patch testing and during patch testing.
4. Avoid sun exposure to the back for 1 month before patch testing.
5. It is ok to take antihistamines before and during patch testing.
6. **Tell your doctor if you are pregnant.**

How patch testing is done:

1. On your Monday visit, you will have strips of chambers with suspect haptens placed on your back. This may be uncomfortable and cause itching. Avoid scratching. Do not swim or exercise or sweat heavily or bathe/shower from during the week and keep your back dry. Continue to stay out of the sun and avoid medications as discussed above.
2. On Wednesday, the patches will be removed and your doctor will read the results. Continue to keep your back dry. Continue to stay out of the sun and avoid medications as discussed above.
3. On Friday, your doctor will look at your back again for delayed results and you will be provided with your allergen list (a list of what substances to avoid).
4. You may have blisters at positive patch test sites, and very rarely extended reactions can occur and may leave a scar.

