

Your doctor would like you to have a skin test. The test will help us learn what is causing your allergic reactions. This handout explains what you should know about your skin test. If you have any questions about this handout or your test, please do not hesitate to call the Department of Allergy and Immunology at **781-744-8442**.

## ◀ Preparing for the test

### Medications

Antihistamines can affect your skin test. They are used to treat allergies, coughs, colds, motion sickness and sleep problems. **Before your test, stop taking any medication that contains an antihistamine.** This includes both prescription and over-the-counter antihistamines. But first talk with the doctor who prescribed the antihistamine to learn if you can stop it safely.

Follow the chart below to see when you need to stop your specific antihistamine. If you are not sure whether you are taking an antihistamine, please call our office.

Days/hours before the test	Stop these medications
7 days before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Levocetirizine (Xyzal)</li> <li>• Cetirizine (Zyrtec)</li> <li>• Hydroxyzine (Atarax or Vistaril)</li> </ul>
4 days before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fexofenadine (Allegra, Allegra-D)</li> <li>• Loratadine (Claritin, Alavert)</li> <li>• Azelastine nasal spray (Astelin or Astepro)</li> <li>• Desloratadine (Clarinex)</li> <li>• Olopatadine (Patanase)</li> <li>• Azelastine and fluticasone nasal spray (Dymista)</li> </ul>
48 hours before	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All other prescription and over-the-counter allergy, cold and cough medications. Examples include Actifed, AlleRx, Benadryl, Chlor-Trimeton, Dimetapp, Duratuss, Periactin, Rynatan, Semprex-D, Tavist, and Tussionex.</li> <li>• Medication for motion sickness, such as meclizine, Antivert, Bonine, Dramamine and Phenergan</li> <li>• Sleep aids that include diphenhydramine (such as Tylenol PM and Advil PM)</li> </ul>

### Medications (continued)

- Keep taking your usual medications, unless one is listed above.
- **Do not** stop inhalers or medication for asthma.
- If you take medications for depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia or other psychiatric disorders, please let us know. These medications may affect your skin test. Because of this, we may have to slightly change the way we do the test to get the best results. **Do not stop taking these medications.**

### General prep

- Eat something before your test.
- **Do not** get a sunburn before your test. This could affect the results.
- A child who is getting tested must be with an adult.
- Plan to be in the clinic for about 2 to 3 hours.

### ◀ **What to expect during the test**

- In the first part of the test, drops of allergy extracts (substances that may be causing your symptoms) are placed on the skin of your back. Then the skin is pricked with a plastic device so the extract goes under the skin's surface.
- In the second part of the test, small amounts of allergy extracts may be injected into the skin of your upper arm.
- Your nurse will look at your skin 15 minutes after the test to see if you have any symptoms. After the testing is over, the doctor will review the results with you.
- You may feel some mild discomfort when the extracts are placed in your skin. There is also a small chance that you may feel congested, sneeze, cough, or have itchy eyes during or after the testing.