

skin test to suggest lifestyle changes you can make to avoid substances that may be causing your symptoms. The Doctor may prescribe certain medicines including antihistamines, intranasal corticosteroids, and decongestants to control your symptoms. Additionally, the Doctor may also recommend allergen Immunotherapy. Allergen immunotherapy could provide long lasting benefit. You can "train" your immune system not to react exaggerated to an allergen anymore. This is done through a series of allergy shots called immunotherapy.

One to two weekly shots expose you to very small doses of the allergen, that causes an allergic reaction. The dose is gradually increased, usually during a three to six months period. Maintenance shots are needed every four weeks for three to five years. Immunotherapy is usually used when other treatments like anti-symptomatic medication are not satisfactory.

**your doctor may advise against skin testing if you :**

- ❶ **Have had a severe allergic reaction within 6 weeks.** You may be so sensitive to certain substances that even the tiny amounts used in skin tests could trigger a life-threatening reaction (anaphylaxis). However, a skin prick test can be repeated after 6 weeks with appropriate precautions.
- ❷ **Take medications that could interfere with test results.** These include antihistamines, many antidepressants and some heartburn medications. Your doctor may determine that it is better for you to continue taking these medications than to temporarily discontinue them in preparation for a skin test.
- ❸ **Have certain skin conditions.** If you have a skin condition (severe eczema or psoriasis) that affects large areas of skin on your arms and back — the usual testing sites — there may not be enough clear, uninvolved skin to do an effective test. In this case, a bloodtest may be performed.

**is the test safe ?**

Very small amounts of allergens are tested on your skin, so skin testing is safe. During the test, the allergist will watch for a possible severe allergic reaction, but it rarely happens.

Skin tests are best performed in an allergist's office to assure the test results are read properly and to minimize the risk of rare side effects.

**are there any quality assurance measures relating to a skin prick test ?**

Allergen extracts should have batch-to batch consistency and the skin test results should be comparable when the same extracts from different manufacturers are utilized. Only if batch-to-batch consistency is maintained results are more reliable with low false positive and the safety of the test is assured.



एलर्जी एंड इम्युनो थेरेपी क्लिनिक

**एडवांस लंग्स केअर सेंटर**

( ए.एल.सी.सी. )

18, विजयानंद सोसायटी, गेटवेल हॉस्पिटल के पास,  
धंतोली, नागपुर. मो : 9022602632



**SKIN PRICK TEST**



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**Allergy facts**

- ❶ Allergy involves an exaggerated response of the immune system, often to common substances such as foods, house dust mites or pollen.
- ❷ The immune system is an intricate system that defends the body against foreign invaders like bacteria or viruses.
- ❸ Allergens are substances that are foreign to the body, normally not harmful but can cause an overreaction in allergic patients.
- ❹ Immunoglobulin E (IgE) is the antibody that triggers the allergic reaction.
- ❺ Allergies cannot only develop at any age, but many individuals also outgrow allergies over time.
- ❻ While environment plays a role in allergy development, there is a greater risk of developing allergic conditions if a person has a family history of allergy, especially in parents or siblings.

**what is an allergy ?**

An allergy refers to an exaggerated reaction by our immune system in response to exposure to certain foreign substances. It is exaggerated because these foreign substances are usually seen by the body as harmless and no response occurs in non allergic people. In allergic individuals, the body recognizes the foreign substance as harmful and one arm of the immune system generates a response.

**what causes an allergy ?**

Allergy-producing substances are called "allergens." Examples of allergens include house dust mites, pollens, moulds, animal proteins, foods, and even medications.

To understand the language of allergy, it is important to remember that allergens are substances that are foreign to the body and can cause an allergic reaction in certain people. When an allergic individual comes in contact with an allergen, the immune system mounts a response through the IgE antibody. Therefore, people who are prone to allergies are said to be allergic or "atopic."

Allergy tests are a way to get to the bottom of what is causing your symptoms. They help your doctor find your triggers and prevent problems.

During allergy skin tests, your skin is exposed to suspected allergy-causing substances (allergens) and is then observed for signs of an allergic reaction.

Along with your medical history, allergy tests may be able to confirm whether or not a particular substance you touch, breathe or eat is causing symptoms.

**what is a skin prick test ?**

Skin prick test is the most common allergy test performed in an allergy clinic by specially trained staff. A skin prick test, also called a puncture or scratch test, checks for immediate allergic reactions to many substances at once. This test is usually done to identify allergies to pollen, mould, pet dander, dust mites and foods. In adults, the test is usually done on the forearm. Children may be tested on the upper back.

**How is the test performed ?**

The skin prick test involves:

- ❶ Placing small amount of substances that may be causing your symptoms on the skin, most often on the forearm, upper arm, or back.
- ❷ The skin is then pricked so the allergen goes under the skin's surface.
- ❸ The healthcare provider closely watches the skin for swelling and redness or other signs of a reaction. Results are usually seen within 15 to 20 minutes.
- ❹ Several allergens can be tested at the same time.



**How to prepare for the test ?**

Before any allergy testing, the health care provider will ask about:

- ❶ Illnesses
- ❷ Where you live and work
- ❸ Lifestyle
- ❹ Foods and eating habits

Allergy medicines can change the results of skin tests. Your doctor will tell you which medicines to avoid and when to stop taking them before the test.

**How will the test feel ?**

Skin tests may cause very mild discomfort when the skin is pricked.

If you have allergies, just a little swelling that looks and feels like a mosquito bite will occur where the allergen(s) to which you are allergic was introduced. You do not have to wait long to find out what is triggering your allergies. Reactions occur within about 20 minutes. And you generally will not have any other symptoms besides the small hives where the tests were done, which go away within 30 minutes.

**How do you interpret the results ?**

**Normal Results**

A negative test result means there were no skin changes in response to the allergen. This negative reaction most often means that you are not allergic to the substance.

**Analyse results of skin prick test**

WHEEL DIAMETER		
Validation	Allergen	Result
	< 3 mm	Negative
	≥ 3 mm	Positive
Negative Control: ≥ 0 mm		
Positive Control: ≥ 3 mm		

**What Abnormal Results Mean**

A positive result means you reacted to a substance. Your doctor will see a red, raised area called a wheal. Skin tests are usually accurate. A positive skin test means that you are sensitized to the particular allergen. Although allergic sensitization is a major risk factor for allergic disease, it is not synonymous with allergic disease. People can have a positive response to a substance with allergy skin testing, but not have any problems with that substance in everyday life. Diagnosis of allergy is based upon the positive skin tests which correlate with the your clinical history. In rare cases, a person may have a negative allergy test and still be allergic to the substance.

Your doctor will consider your symptoms and the results of your