

# Contact Dermatitis & Occupational Dermatology Patch Test Clinic



## Patient details

Patient name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

## Appointments

Appointment 1: Monday (*allow up to 3 hours*) \_\_\_\_\_

Appointment 2: Wednesday (*allow 1 hour*) \_\_\_\_\_

Appointment 3: Friday (*allow 1 hour*) \_\_\_\_\_

You are required to attend all three appointments as part of the allergy testing process.

**Important:** If these times are suitable, could you please ring to **confirm** your attendance.

**Ph.** 9623 9402 (direct) or 9623 9400 (switchboard).

A non-attendance fee of \$50 will apply if you fail to attend or notify us that you will be cancelling your appointments.

## Information about appointments

Most patients have to attend 3 appointments over a 5 day period.

**Appointment 1:** Patients will have a full consultation with the specialist dermatologist, who will decide what needs to be tested. The clinic nurse will then make the patches up and apply them to the back.

**Appointment 2:** The patches are removed and the back will be looked at to see if there have been any reactions or 'red spots' showing up where the patches were.

**Appointment 3:** The dermatologist will have another look at the back to see if there has been any other 'red spots' showing up where the patches were. The dermatologist will then discuss results and management of your condition.

**Please continue to read for IMPORTANT information.**

# ABOUT PATCH TESTING

## What is patch testing?

Patch testing is a process used to detect whether someone has allergic contact dermatitis to something they contact at home or at work. During patch testing, small amounts of chemicals or substances that are used at home or at work are diluted and placed onto discs which are mounted on hypoallergenic tape and then placed on the back.

Patch testing does not test for food allergies. **If we find a relevant allergen, we may be able to cure your skin problem.**



EXAMPLE OF PATCH TESTING.

## How many patches?

The number of patches applied is specific to each individual. There are 10 discs on each patch. Some people have 5-10 patches or sometimes even more.

## Why the back?

The back is used for patch testing because it has lots of room to put the patches. This also gives people the opportunity to have a bath, as the patches must be kept dry during the testing. Showers must be avoided for the length of the testing.

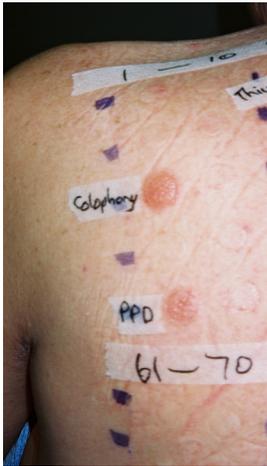
## Preparation for testing

- If your doctor has given you cortisone/prednisolone tablets for your skin condition, please call us for advice. Generally cortisone/prednisolone tablets should not be taken 48 hours before testing.
- Shower the morning of the tests, as you **cannot get your back wet** from the time the patches go on until the time you see the dermatologist for your **third** appointment.
- Men with hair on their backs should shave or wax it off a day or two before testing (do not use chemical hair removal products).
- Do not put any creams or oils on your back the morning of the testing.
- Do not get your back exposed to sunlight for days prior to testing. It is thought sunlight before testing may reduce the immune response of the skin.
- During testing, **sweating must be avoided** as patches could fall off. If you are working in a job where you get hot and sweaty, please call us for advice. Physical activity or playing sports during tested is also strongly discouraged.

## What does an allergic reaction look like?

Once the patches are taken off, the dermatologist looks for any red raised spots that may have appeared. These are normally the size of a 5 cent coin and appear where the discs were placed. They are usually itchy.

## EXAMPLE OF POSITIVE PATCH TEST REACTIONS.



Interpretation of patch tests requires considerable skill. Not all positive tests are relevant so that it is necessary for the dermatologist to interpret the meaning of the reaction.

If this testing is negative, it may indicate that you have a different condition such as irritant contact dermatitis, eczema or contact urticaria (another form of testing known as prick testing or a blood test is used to diagnose this condition).

If you develop redness, swelling or blisters after your last visit, it may mean that you have a late reaction. Please ring the Foundation.

### What to bring to the appointment?

Bring everything which is in contact with your damaged skin. We may test up to 20 products.

#### **These might include:**

- Products used on your skin (bring in its original container), even if you don't think it is causing any problems e.g. moisturisers, hand cleansers, cosmetics (including nail polish).
- Products specific to the area of skin affected e.g. gloves if you have hand dermatitis, or shoes and socks if your feet are affected.
- Work samples- either bring them in their original container if not too big, or put a small sample amount into individual screw top glass container and label.
- Safety Data Sheets (SDS) for all products and chemicals you come into contact with in the workplace. You should be able to get these from your OHS representative, union official, supervisor or employer. It is compulsory for the workplace to supply these.

While we may not necessarily test all of these substances, we would like to see them and assess their relevance. **You will be required to bring these items to all three appointments.**

### How much will patch testing cost?

The cost of the consultations and patch testing is usually between \$400 and \$670. The Medicare rebate is approximately \$200.

The total account must be paid at the conclusion of the last appointment (on the Friday). If blood tests or biopsies are required, additional fees will be billed by the pathology company.

### Additional payment information

- Pensioners & Health Care Card holders are billed at a reduced rate. Please contact our office for more information regarding these fees.
- WorkCover claims. If your skin condition is considered to be work-related, an account may be sent to your employer. Please bring your employers mailing address details with you.

### What payment methods are accepted?

EFTPOS, credit cards, cheque and cash are all accepted.



**The Skin and Cancer Foundation**

Level 1, 80 Drummond Street, Carlton

(The corner of Queensberry and Drummond Streets, enter via Drummond Street).

Ph. 03 9623 9402 (Direct) or 9623 9400 (Switchboard)



**How to get here:**

- You can reach us via bus (from Flinders and Russell Streets)
- Train to Parliament station
- Tram to Victoria Parade
- Parking – meter parking on streets or car park at Melbourne Museum on Rathdowne Street.