

Department of Dermatology, Allergy and Skin Surgery

Patient Information – Understanding Patch Test Results

Can you explain why I have developed these allergic reactions?

Your skin has become `sensitised`. You have developed special memory cells in your blood. They will recognise the substance if it touches your skin, and alert more blood cells, rather like a gathering army. They `fight` the substance and this produces eczema.

I do not understand why I have become allergic now. I did not have these problems before.

It is not fully understood why some people and not others develop these allergic reactions. You do not become `sensitised` immediately, but after a minimum of two exposures. Sometimes there can be exposure for years before developing an allergy.

Why doesn't the eczema come as soon as I touch the substance?

This type of allergic reaction is never immediate. It is just like the patch tests when we left the special tapes on your back for 48 hours before we looked for signs of allergy.

How do I avoid these substances in shampoos, conditioners, make-up, treatment creams and washing up liquid?

All cosmetic and toiletry products must be labelled with their ingredients according to a European Directive. You will be given the name of the substances in the form that they appear on the labels.

Can you tell me the most common things that cause people to develop this type of allergy?

Yes, things that are in contact with the skin such as:

Nickel - Earrings, jewellery.

Fragrance - perfumed products

Colophony - some elastoplasts

Neomycin - an antibiotic applied to the skin

Preservatives - they stop creams and liquids going mouldy

Thiuram/carba - found in rubber gloves.

Am I allergic to food?

Food allergy is unlikely to cause eczema in adults. It is a very different type of allergy and is not tested in this way.

Safe & compassionate care,

every time

Understanding Patch Test Results

Place patient label here.

Date: _____

Patch Tests show you are allergic to:

Previous known allergens are:

These allergies are likely to last forever so it is important that you try very hard to avoid contact with these substances/products because eczema will develop wherever the substances have touched your skin.

How can I help reduce healthcare associated infections?

Infection control is important to the well-being of our patients and for that reason we have infection control procedures in place. Keeping your hands clean is an effective way of preventing the spread of infections. We ask that you, and anyone visiting you, use the hand sanitiser available at the main entrance of the hospital and at the entrance to every clinical area before coming in to and after leaving the clinical area or hospital. In some situations hands may need to be washed at the sink using soap and water rather than using the hand sanitiser. Staff will let you know if this is the case.

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