

Skin prick testing

Your child has an appointment for a skin prick test.

What does it involve?

An allergen is any substance that can cause an allergy (e.g. nuts, grass, egg, milk).

Skin prick testing involves making a tiny prick with a lancet through a drop of allergen placed on the skin. This is usually on the forearm, although sometimes the child's back may be used. If the test is positive, the skin will become red with a blister-like 'wheal' in the centre. A positive result will be visible after 15 minutes. This form of testing is quite safe as only a tiny amount of allergen is introduced into the skin.

Before the test:

It would also be helpful if you and your child could watch the following video on skinprick testing prior to your appointment <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8QvH6F6sHsQ>

If your child is taking **short-acting antihistamines** (usually taken two-three times a day), Such as chlorphenamine (Piriton®), they should stop taking them three days before the appointment.

If your child is taking **long-acting antihistamines (usually taken daily)**, such as cetirizine (Zirtek®) or loratadine (Clarityn®), they should stop taking them five days before the appointment.

If your child suffers from eczema, do not apply any moisturisers to their arms on the day of the test

Do not use any creams containing hydrocortisone/**steroid** for 48 hours prior to the test on the child's forearms.

Contact the allergy nurse if:

- Your child has had antihistamines within **72** hours of the test
- **Your child has required steroids such as prednisolone within 1 week of the test**
- Your child is unwell
- Your child has experienced a flare up of their eczema and/or asthma
- Your child has had a serious allergic reaction within the last four weeks

When will I get the results?

The results of the test will be available as soon as the test is complete. This will be discussed with you before you leave.

Sometimes the skin prick test may be done in conjunction with other tests, such as blood tests, and the overall results may not be available for a few weeks. This will be discussed with you on the day of your appointment.

Contact details

Allergy nurse: Gaynor Shakesheff Telephone: 0300 019 3111

Paediatric allergy secretary: Telephone: 0300 019 8379

For further general health-related information, please ask the relevant department for an Information Prescription or contact:

The Health Information Centre

Poole Hospital NHS Foundation Trust
Longfleet Road
Poole
Dorset
BH15 2JB
Telephone: 0300 019 8003

Author: Gaynor Shakesheff
Date: January 2022

We can supply this information in other formats, in larger print, on audiotape, or have it translated for you. Please call the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on 0300 109 8499 or the Health Information Centre on 0300 019 8003 for further advice.