

FRANCE AVENUE FAMILY PHYSICIANS

ALLERGY SKIN TESTING-Prick Technique

Allergy tests are designed to gather the most specific information possible so your doctor can determine what you are allergic to and provide the best treatment. The prick technique involves introducing a small amount of allergen into the skin by making a slight disruption on the surface of your skin and placing a drop of allergen on the area. If you have an allergy, the specific allergens that you are allergic to will cause a chain reaction to begin in your body.

Test results are available within 20 minutes of testing.

What are the possible reactions?

There are two types of reactions that occur with allergy skin testing: local and/or systemic reactions.

Local reactions: “A positive skin test.” By measuring the size of these reactions we can tell how strongly a person is allergic to the tested substance. This reaction happens quickly and can remain 30 minutes to a hour after testing.

Systemic Reactions: Are much less common than local reactions. Systemic reactions are usually mild and respond rapidly to treatment. The symptoms and course of a systemic reaction or anaphylaxis can vary. Initial signs can be deceptively mild, such as a runny nose, hives, swelling of lips or throat, or a nondescript “strange feeling.” These symptoms can quickly become more serious, including difficulty breathing, swelling of the throat or other parts of the body, rapid drop in blood pressure, dizziness, unconsciousness or extremely rare-death.

Other symptoms of system reactions or anaphylaxis include:

- Runny nose
- Hives
- Itching or swelling of the lip, tongue or throat
- Tightness of the throat
- Hoarse voice
- Nausea
- Vomiting
- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Lightheadedness

Systemic reactions or anaphylactic shock require immediate treatment. Most serious systemic reactions develop within 30 minutes of the allergy pricks and this is why it is recommended you wait in the office for 30 minutes following skin testing. However, these symptoms/reactions may present after you leave the office. If you experience a reaction after leaving the clinic, it is important to seek immediate emergency medical care.

Epinephrine is **THE** treatment for a systemic reaction/anaphylaxis. Epinephrine constricts blood vessels in the digestive tract and skin and raises blood pressures. It also widens the air passages to make breathing easier.

It is important to know that the earlier epinephrine is given, the more effective it is in stopping the reaction. Symptoms usually improve quickly after epinephrine is administered. Although epinephrine acts fast, its effects are short-lived. If you are having a reaction, the doctor may give you second and third doses of epinephrine over several hours to control symptoms.

People on blood pressure medications, such as ACE inhibitors and beta-blockers, may not respond to epinephrine. If you are on any of these medications, it is important that you discontinued its use 5 days prior to your testing.

You may be given a prescription for an easy-to-use, self-injectable shot of epinephrine. You should carry this shot with you in case of an emergency anaphylactic episode. Always seek medical attention immediately after using a self-injectable shot of epinephrine since one shot may not be enough to stop a reaction and other medications may be required.

I have read and understand the above and understand the procedure and risks of allergy skin testing. I agree to notify the doctor or staff if I experience any of the symptoms associated with a systemic reaction. I agree to proceed with the allergy testing as planned

Patient's Signature _____ Date _____