

Patch test: Thursday applications

i Information for patients
Dermatology



PROUD TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

SHEFFIELD TEACHING HOSPITALS NHS FOUNDATION TRUST



What will happen when I come back to have my patch tests done?

Following your visit for an initial assessment, you will be booked into clinics to have your patch tests done.

Two linked visits to hospital are required on a **Thursday afternoon, and Monday morning**. At these visits the patches will be applied, marked, read and finally interpreted.

You will need someone at home to remove your patches on **Saturday afternoon**.

What should I bring to the patch test clinics?

The nurse or doctor may have asked you to bring back some items or packaging, either to put on your back or for reference at the final reading.

What will happen at each appointment?

Thursday afternoon appointment

- The test substances will be applied in special small containers to your back and the sites marked with ink (to allow identification of where the materials have been placed).
- Allow up to 1 hour for this visit as some items have to be freshly prepared after your arrival.
- The sites may itch. This is normal.

On Saturday afternoon at home

- You should ask someone to remove the patches that hold the containers.
- One strip of tape (that holds no containers) should be left on your back. This strip will have been marked as 'please leave'.

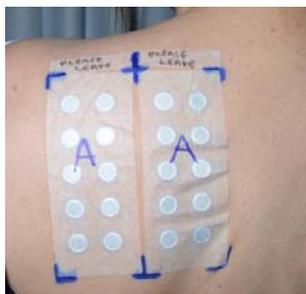
Monday morning appointment

- Your back will be examined by the doctor. The results of the patch tests and of any blood tests will be discussed.
- Please allow 30 minutes for this last visit.

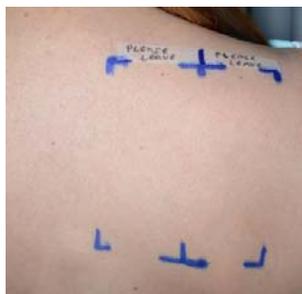
What should I do if I have problems with the appointments?

If you are unable to attend and need to change your appointments, or if you need the hospital to take your patches off, please ring as soon as possible on **0114 271 2442** so that we can rearrange your visits. You may have to wait longer for one particular set of linked visits or see a different doctor for your results if you change to a different set of visits.

Photographs of the patch testing process



Patches applied



Patches removed



Positive reaction

Might my tests be postponed for any reason?

We may not patch test you if you:

- are pregnant or breastfeeding
- have extensive eczema on your back

- have had sun exposure on your back or used a sunbed over the previous 2 weeks
- are on a moderate or high dose of steroid tablets

If these apply, please contact us on **0114 271 2442**

Are there any things that I need to do, or to avoid doing, during tests?

Things to avoid:

- Do not get your back wet during the tests: please avoid baths, showers and swimming as these can invalidate the tests. It is best to wash down with a flannel avoiding the test areas.
- Do not wear your best clothes as the marker ink may stain.
- Do not expose your back to the sun during this procedure.
- Do not undertake any sport, or heavy physical work during the week of the tests as movements and sweating can make the patches fall off or the markings disappear.

Things that can help:

- Do wear a close fitting garment e.g. vest or old T-shirt (and bra) in bed to help keep the patches in place.
- If a patch peels off, reinforce with tape. If a whole patch comes loose, remove and note the time and date.
- Contact us on **0114 271 2018** or **271 3670** if you are concerned.
- Consider shaving your back on the morning your patches are due to be applied if you think the nurse might otherwise need to do that in order for the patches to stick.

What side effects may occur?

Side effects are rare, but include:

- Skin reddening and itching from positive test results or from the tape. This usually disappears after a few days.
- Persistent reaction: some positive test reactions (eg to gold), may last for up to a month.
- Flare-up of eczema: a positive patch test may be accompanied by a flare-up of existing or previous eczema.
- Pigment (colouring) change: an increase or decrease in pigment may be seen at the site of patch tests.
- Infection or scarring: these are rare.
- Allergy: very rarely, about 1 in 500 times, you may become allergic to one of the substances applied during patch testing. In practice this does not seem to cause a problem in the long term
- Skin staining: sometimes substances, such as dyes, may stain the skin for a few days. This is normal and staining will disappear.

What should I do if I get a reaction after my last visit?

Positive reactions are red and itchy and occur at the test site. They will usually become apparent by the last of your visits. However, it can sometimes take longer for a positive reaction to appear.

If you do develop a late reaction, please contact the clinic on:

- **0114 271 2018**



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