NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL℠

700 Children's Drive
Columbus, Ohio 43205-2696
nationwidechildrens.org

ALLERGY TESTING

If your child is being referred to us for possible allergies, asthma or nasal congestion, it is likely that skin testing will be done. An allergy is a reaction of some part of the body to substances in the environment. These may include dust, mold, tree or grass pollens, animals, insects, or food. Testing can help to find out what is causing your child's allergy symptoms, and what can be done to relieve his or her symptoms. Your visit will last about 2 hours.

HOW TO PREPARE FOR THE TEST

1. **Stop all medicines that contain antihistamines.** Antihistamines, which are contained in many allergy and cold remedies, will interfere with skin testing. They must be stopped before the appointment.

   Medications that **must be stopped 5 days** before your appointment include: **Zyrtec®** (cetirizine), **Atarax®** and **Vistaril®** (hydroxyzine) and **Allegra®** (fexofenadine)

   Medications that **must be stopped 3 days (72 hours)** before your appointment include: **Claritin®** (loratadine), **Clarinex®** (desloratidine), **Benadryl®** (diphenhydramine), **Tavist®** (clemastine), **Dimetapp®** (brompheniramine), and **Rynatan®** (chlorpheniramine), and over-the-counter cough and cold medicines.

2. Continue medicines that have been prescribed for wheezing. Other medicines that can be continued include any oral steroids, any antibiotic, and any nose spray (other than Astelin®).

3. If you have any questions about which medicines are okay to continue, or do not feel it's possible to stay off a medicine for the recommended time,please call (614) 722-5500.

4. If your child is being tested for bee sting allergies, it must be at least 6 weeks since being stung.

HOW THE TEST IS DONE

The test will be explained to you and your child.

- Your child will be asked to lie flat on his or her stomach (Picture 2, page 2).
- A multi-tipped plastic applicator is dipped into a container of oily drops of allergy extract (Picture 1, page 2). The plastic applicator is gently pressed on your child's back. Then the liquid is wiped off.
- After the allergy tests have been applied, your child may sit up and play until it is time for the doctor to read the tests (usually 10 to 15 minutes later). *Continued on page 2.*

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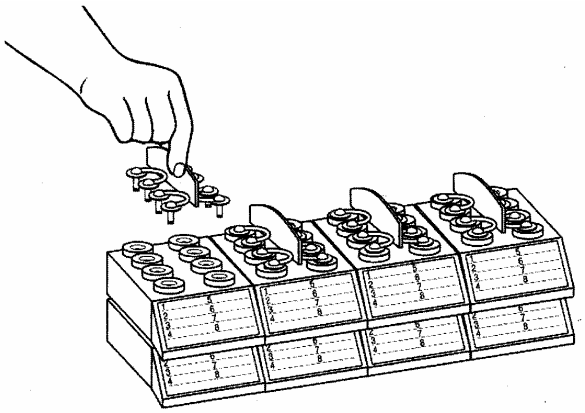
HOW THE TEST IS DONE, continued

- Your child may complain that her back itches, but she must not scratch it. After the testing is over, the area can be cleansed. Any redness or swelling will go away.
- Sometimes the doctor may want to do additional skin tests with substances that contain more concentrated allergens. For these tests, substances are injected, usually on the upper arm, with a tiny needle and syringe. A small raised bump (bleb) forms when these skin tests are applied. The doctor will read these tests 10 to 15 minutes later.
- The doctor will then explain the results of the test and the plan of medical care.

APPOINTMENTS

We look forward to meeting and working with you. If you cannot keep your appointment, or if you have questions, please call the Children's Hospital Allergy Clinic in advance at (614) 722-5500.



Picture 1 The applicator for the allergy extract.

Picture 2 Having an allergy test.