

## PATIENT INSTRUCTION SHEET FOR ALLERGY SKIN TESTING

**Skin Test:** Skin tests are a method of testing for allergic antibodies. A test consists of introducing small amounts of the suspected substance, or allergen, into the skin and noting the development of a positive reaction (which consists of a wheal, swelling, or flare in the surrounding area of redness). The results are read 15 to 20 minutes after application of the allergen. The skin test methods used are:

**Prick Method:** The skin is pricked with a plastic device with a drop of allergen.

**Intradermal Method:** This method consists of injecting small amounts of an allergen into the superficial layers of the skin with a small needle.

**Multi- Test Method:** This method is used for small children and allows a multi-prong plastic device to test for multiple allergens at a time.

Interpreting the clinical significance of skin tests requires skillful correlation of the test results with the patient's clinical history. Positive tests indicate the presence of allergenic antibodies and are not necessarily correlated with clinical symptoms.

You will be skin tested to important airborne allergens in southern California and possibly some foods. The skin testing generally takes one hour. If you have a specific allergic sensitivity to one of the allergens, a red, raised, itchy hive (caused by histamine release into the skin) will appear on your skin within 15-20 minutes. These positive reactions will gradually disappear over a period of 30-60 minutes, and, typically, no treatment is necessary for this itchiness. Occasionally local swelling at a test site will begin 4 to 8 hours after the skin tests are applied, particularly at sites of intradermal testing. These reactions are not serious and will disappear over the next week or so. They should be measured and reported to your physician at your next visit.

### DO NOT TAKE:

1. **No over-the-counter antihistamines** should be used **3-5 days prior** to the scheduled skin testing. These include cold tablets, sinus tablets, hay fever medications, or oral treatments for itchy skin. Some of the names of these drugs include **Actifed cold & sinus, Allerfrim Aprodine, Dimetapp cold and allergy, Triaminic cold & allergy, Drixoral(Chlor-Trimeton), Dristan, Benadryl, Rondec, Atarax (Hydroxyzine)** and many others. If you have any questions whether or not you are using an antihistamine, please ask the nurse or the doctor.
2. **The following prescription antihistamines also need to be discontinued prior to testing: Astelin and Sempex-D for 5 days prior. Alavert, Allegra, Atarax, Claritin, Clarinex, Zyrtec, Palgic, Periactin, Tavist allergy, Vistaril, Rynatuss, Promethazone cough syrup, Histussin HC, Tussionex, for 7 days prior.**
3. Medications such as over-the-counter sleeping medicines (e.g. **Nytilol**) and other prescribed drugs, such as **amitriptyline hydrochloride (Elavil), doxepin (Sinequan), and imipramine (Tofranil)** have antihistaminic activity and should be discontinued at least two weeks prior to receiving skin tests. Please make the doctor and nurse aware of the fact that you are taking these medications so that you may be advised as to how long prior to testing you should stop taking them.

### YOU MAY:

1. You may continue on your intranasal allergy sprays excluding Astelin, which must be discontinued 5 days before testing.
2. Asthma inhalers do not interfere with skin testing and should be used as prescribed.

### PLEASE LET THE PHYSICIAN AND NURSE KNOW:

1. If you are taking any beta blockers or antidepressants.
2. If you are pregnant.
3. If you have a fever or wheezing.
4. Any medication you are taking (bring a list if necessary)

After skin testing, you will have a conference with Dr. Kim who will discuss your testing results and formulate an individualized treatment plan.

IF FOR ANY REASON YOU NEED TO CHANGE YOUR SKIN TEST APPOINTMENT, PLEASE GIVE US AT LEAST 24 HOURS NOTICE. DUE TO THE LENGTH OF TIME SCHEDULED FOR SKIN TESTING, A LAST MINUTE CHANGE RESULTS IN LOSS OF VALUABLE TIME ANOTHER PATIENT MIGHT HAVE UTILIZED.