

Allergy Testing

About Your Test

Our experienced staff are fully trained in the performance of these tests, but the ordering doctor remains responsible for explaining the results.

Once your arm (or back) is prepared a small amount of each allergen is applied and pricked. Your immune system will interact with the allergen over the next 15 minutes and produce an itchy wheal (like a mosquito bite) if you have sensitisation to that product. You must not scratch the wheals while they develop as this may change their intensity.

Some medications may interfere with the results. You will need to withhold antihistamines for 3 days before the test. You can take any other medications as normal. Nasal sprays and asthma inhalers may be used up to the time of the test. As part of the test, we will ask what medications you have taken in the past 3 days.

Negative testing does not guarantee there is no allergy but makes an allergic cause less likely. Further tests may be required to find the cause of the problem or challenge testing may be required. For interpretation, please contact the person who requested the test. They have access to the Awanui Immunopathologists who are experts in the interpretation of allergy testing.

You will need to allow up to 1 hour for your appointment.



Re-introductions

Many children grow out of egg, wheat and milk allergy. Allergy to seafood, tree nuts and peanuts are more likely to persist. Skin allergy testing may help identify the correct time for a challenge test, but this should still be performed in a safe environment under the guidance of a paediatrician/allergist even if the skin allergy test reactions have reduced significantly.

Eczema and Foods

Particularly in children and rarely in adults' eczema will flare with certain foods and skin allergy testing will be positive. If all the foods in our panel are being consumed without severe reactions managing the skin without complete food avoidance is advised as stopping these foods completely may increase the risk of anaphylaxis on subsequent exposure. Therefore, any allergy testing is rarely indicated for foods in eczema unless reintroductions of avoided foods is planned.

Information continues overleaf.

Aeroallergens

We offer testing to house dust mite, pollens (grasses, birch and plantain), cats, dogs and the common moulds (*Alternaria*, *aspergillus*). For children under 2 years of age, we offer house dust mite, cats, and dogs as these are the relevant allergens for this age group.

Hayfever, asthma and eczema may relate to allergies to these. A positive result indicates need for avoidance and that a patient could potentially be desensitised.

Foods

We offer testing to milk, egg, peanut, wheat, soy, white fish and shrimp.

An immediate reaction to a food should be investigated and if more than one food was involved, testing each food may help identify the cause. If a patient routinely consumes a food without a reaction, there is no need to test that food after an acute reaction.

The testing should generally be performed at least 4 weeks after the reaction. If only one food was associated with the reaction a blood test may be more appropriate. Likewise, if the foods involved are not contained in our panel, consider performing a blood test instead.

Post Testing Care

If you develop a rash, wheeze, and feel dizzy or unwell on the day of your test, please go urgently to your nearest emergency department for assessment with this information sheet.

If you experience any increase in the reactions where we have performed your testing, please contact our appointments line.

If you require further information regarding your test procedure, please visit awanuilabs.co.nz and select your region