



Allergy Tests

Allergy testing determines what substances (allergens) may cause you to experience allergic reactions such as sneezing, a runny nose, hives, eczema, and sometimes asthma attacks. Allergy testing can be done in several ways. Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology offers both blood (RAST®) and skin-prick tests.

Blood (RAST®) test – a RAST® test is a blood test that measures how many antibodies identify a particular allergen.

Sometimes your doctor will request a RAST® test instead of, or together with, a skin-prick test.

You do not need to make an appointment for a RAST® test alone, only if you are having the RAST® test together with a skin-prick test. The RAST® test is performed at all Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology Collection Centres.

Skin-prick test – a skin-prick test is a rapid and reliable allergy test, and is commonly done on the inner part of the forearm. The test takes about 30 minutes.

You must make an appointment at a Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology **Principal Procedural Centre** for a skin-prick test. All patients will be privately billed for this test. A maximum out-of-pocket fee* of \$120 or \$60 (conc) will apply for all Medicare rebateable items on this request. The out-of-pocket fee is eligible for inclusion in the Medicare safety net. For your nearest Principal Procedural Centre, please telephone **Patient Services Support** on 1300 732 030.

General guidelines

- Fasting is not necessary before the test.
- Skin-prick tests **MUST** be done on clean, dry, and healthy skin. (Hairy arms may need to be shaved.)

Medication guidelines

- **STOP** taking all antihistamines or Livostin spray 72 hours before the test.
- **STOP** taking Hismanal and Astemizole 6–8 weeks before the test.
- If you are unsure whether any of the medications you are taking will interfere with the test, please consult your doctor or call your nearest Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology laboratory.



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Test procedure

The collector will prick your skin using a multi-tipped device containing mild solutions of possible allergens (eight allergens per device). For adults, three devices are routinely used. For children aged 2–15 years, only one multi-tipped device is used.

After about 15 minutes, the collector will measure **any swelling that develops**.

Please inform the collection staff if you feel short of breath or tight in the chest during the test, or if you develop a rash or severe itch after the test.

IMPORTANT!

Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology is required to inform you that some skin-prick test reagents, including histamine, are considered unregistered by the Therapeutic Goods Authority.

However, these skin-prick test reagents, as used by Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology, are considered in Australia and internationally to be standard preparations and are used under the direction of an immunology specialist.

Skin-prick testing is performed to aid in the diagnosis of allergies. A positive test result in a person with a suggestive clinical history (as assessed by your doctor) is likely to be associated with an allergy. Positive results may occur in people with no history of allergies.

A negative result makes an allergy to that agent unlikely.

If you have further questions, please contact Dr Daman Langguth, Immunology Department, Sullivan Nicolaides Pathology, on (07) 3377 8690.