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.

*Price is correct at time of printing. Subject to change in accordance with review of medicare rebate.
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.