

Patient Information

Respiratory Physiology Skin prick tests (SPTs)

What are SPTs?

SPTs help determine whether you have an allergy to a certain allergen (substances which can cause an allergic reaction). An allergy is when the immune system responds to an allergen such as pollen or pet hair.

Preparing for the test

Please to do not take any antihistamines for 4 days before your appointment as they may interfere with the tests.

These include loratadine (Clarithyn), Cetirizine (Zirtek) and Chlorphenamine (Piriton).

During the test

- The test is performed on the forearm and is tested for 10 allergens.
- This includes testing for positive control which checks your immune system response in the right way.
- The negative control checks you are not allergic to the solution the allergens are mixed with.
- A drop is added of each solution to the skin.
- The skin under the droplet is then pricked with a lancet to scratch the top layer of the skin which allows the solution to get under the surface of the skin.
- Any excess solution is then wiped away.

One of the following will occur:

A positive reaction – the skin under the drop of allergen becomes red and itchy. A white, raised swelling called a weal is surrounded by a red area and takes about 15 to 20 minutes to reach a maximum size. The size of the weal is measured. **This means that you are likely to be allergic to the substance in the solution.** The weal will fade in a few hours.

A negative reaction – the skin under the drop of allergen remains normal. This means that you are not likely to be allergic to the substance in the solution.

After the test

A report will be uploaded to your hospital record and discussed with you at your next appointment.