

## **PATIENT INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALLERGY SKIN TESTING**

Skin testing is a method to test for allergic antibodies. A test consists of introducing small amounts of the suspected substance /allergen into the skin and recording the response 20 minutes after application. A positive reaction consists of a wheal (swelling) and flare (surrounding area of redness). Interpreting the clinical significance of the skin tests requires correlation of the test results with the patient's clinical history.

The skin test methods used are:

**Multi-Test Method:** Allergen solutions are placed on individual prongs of a multi-prong plastic device which is placed on the back for 5 to 10 seconds, then removed.

**Intradermal Method:** This method is used rarely when additional confirmatory response is required. It consists of injecting small amounts of an allergen into superficial layers of the skin.

You will be tested for common Tampa Bay airborne allergens and possibly some of the major foods. These include trees, grasses, weeds, molds, dust mites, and animal danders. Should food testing be included, items may include but are not limited to milk, egg, peanut, and soybean. The skin testing appointment will take approximately 1 hour. Allergy tests will be performed on your back and if required, intradermal testing may occur on your upper arms. If you have a specific allergic sensitivity to an allergen, a red, raised, itchy hive (caused by the release of histamine in the skin) appears on your skin within 15-20 minutes. These positive reactions, which will itch, will gradually disappear over 30-60 minutes, and typically no treatment is necessary. Occasionally local swelling at a test site will begin 4-8 hours after the skin tests, particularly at the sites of intradermal testing. These reactions are called late phase reactions. These reactions are not serious and will gradually disappear over the next week or so.

### **MEDICATIONS YOU NEED TO STOP BEFORE TESTING:**

Antihistamines block the histamine response making the tests inaccurate. NO over the counter or prescription antihistamines should be used 7 days prior to the scheduled skin testing. Many prescription and OTC cold tablets, sinus tablets, hay fever medications, oral treatments for itchy skin, and over the counter sleeping medications may contain antihistamine. Please consult the attached list and review the labelling on your medication to assure that your medication does not contain antihistamine. If you have any questions about medications, please call our office.

### **Medications you CAN take (all others stop taking):**

Nasonex, Nasocort, Rhinocort, Q-Nasl

Flonase (Veramyst)

Prednisone Pack (if you have symptoms such as congestion)

Asthma medications

\*\*Heart or blood pressure medications \*\* (except if it is on the beta blocker sheet, then it **cannot** be taken.

Normally medicine names ending in a "pril" is ok. If it ends in an "lol" it is not ok)

Diabetes medications

Antibiotics