

MARK H. LOWITT, M.D., LLC

**GBMC PHYSICIANS PAVILION EAST
6565 N. CHARLES STREET
SUITE 315
BALTIMORE, MD 21204**

Patch Testing Information for Patients

Why do I need patch testing?

You have been scheduled for patch testing to find out if an identifiable allergy is the cause of your skin problem.

How is patch testing done?

Monday: We place samples of 80 test substances onto 8 rectangular pieces of tape which are applied to your back. Unlike allergy testing at an allergist's office, no needles are involved. There is no pain associated with the procedure.

Wednesday: We see you in the office to remove the tapes, make a preliminary reading of the results, and mark your back with magic marker so we can identify the test areas on Friday.

Friday: We see you again in the office for the final reading, a discussion of the results, and to distribute educational materials to you. An area of swelling or redness at the site of a test indicates a positive result.

What will the results mean?

There are 3 possible outcomes from this testing:

- 1- If all tests are negative, you are not allergic to the substances that we chose to test. Your skin problem is likely not due to an identifiable allergy. "Eczema" is the more likely diagnosis. We will continue to treat you for this condition.
- 2- A test may be positive, but it may be unrelated to your current skin problem. For example, many people are allergic to Thimerosal, a preservative used in vaccines—but unless you are actively exposed to it now, the allergy may have nothing to do with your current skin problem.
- 3- A test may be positive, indicating allergy to a substance that you now are contacting. Avoidance of the product may result in improvement of your skin problem. We will teach you how to avoid your specific allergen(s) and will offer a list of "safe" products that do not contain the thing you are allergic to.

What can I expect?

Patch testing is inconvenient in several ways:

- 1) It requires 3 visits to the office in 1 week
- 2) The test area may become very itchy
- 3) You must not submerge in a bath or shower between Monday and Friday so the ink, the tests, and the tapes don't come off.
- 4) Depending on your insurance, you will be likely responsible for a copay for the first and third patch test visits