

Shea Clinic Allergy Testing Instructions

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If we are planning to perform allergy testing at your next visit, or if you think you might need allergy testing at your first visit please read this carefully.

The allergy testing we perform is a form of skin test where we place a tiny amount of allergen under your skin using a small plastic device (this does not hurt) and then wait for 20 minutes to see if there is a reaction on your skin. The reaction occurs because a substance called histamine is released into the skin. Histamine causes leakage of fluid into the tissues which then causes swelling of the skin where the antigen (allergen) was placed. The more allergic you are, the more histamine is released and the more swelling you get. After 20 minutes, we measure the amount of swelling around the site to determine how allergic you are.

Antihistamines are medications which block effects of histamine on the surrounding tissues and if you have any antihistamines in your system when we perform the test we may get what is known as a false negative. This means that you may be allergic to something, but the antihistamine prevents the swelling which would normally be caused by the released histamine.

For that reason you must not have taken any antihistamines during the week prior to testing. Antihistamines are found in many over-the counter sinus, cold, and allergy medications. A list of common products which you must avoid or stop taking for the week prior to testing follows.

Avoid All Antihistamines For One Week Prior To Testing

This includes:

Allegra® (Fexofenadine) Atarax®, Vistaril® (Hydroxyzine) Zyrtec® (Cetirizine) , Astelin® (Azelastin)
Actifed®, Dimetapp® (Brompheniramine) Benadryl® (Diphenhydramine) Chlortrimeton® (Chlorpheniramine)
Clarinet® (Desloratadine) Claritin® (Loratadine) Phenergan® (Promethazine) Tavist®, Antihist® (Clemastine)
Actifed®, Aller-Chlor®, Bromfed®, Drixoral®, Dura-tab®, Novafed-A®, Ornade®, Poly-Histine-D®, Trinalin®
(Combination medicines)

If you are taking an oral antihistamine that is not listed stop the medicine for 7 days before your allergy test. If you are not sure if the medicine you are taking is an antihistamine ask us.

Stop these medications the 3 days before your appointment:

Zyflo® (zileuton) Tagamet® (cimetidine) Zantac® (ranitidine) Pepcid® (famotidine) Axid® (nizatidine)

Stop these medications the night before your allergy skin test:

Singulair® (montelukast) Accolate® (zafirlukast)

Sometimes antidepressants can also act as an antihistamine. Let your doctor know if you are on any antidepressants or any of the medications below before your skin testing.

*Amitriptyline (Elavil) *Clomipramine (Anafranil) *Doxepin (Sinequan) *Imipramine (Tofranil) *Trimipramine (Surmontil) *Amoxapine (Asendin) *Desipramine (Nupramin) *Nortriptyline (Pamelor, Aventyl) *Protriptyline (Vivactil) *Maprotiline (Ludiomil) *Mirtazapine (Remeron) *Trazadone (Desyrel) *Nefazadone (Serzone)

If you have Meniere's disease you may continue your steroid medications and Valium or Xanax (alprazolam), but stop your meclizine (Antivert) one week prior to testing.