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You are entitled to a copy of any letter we write about you. Please ask if you want one when you come to the hospital.

If you are unhappy with the advice you have been given by your GP, consultant, or another healthcare professional, you may ask for a second (or further) opinion.

The evidence used in the preparation of this leaflet is available on request. Please email: [patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk](mailto:patient.information@salisbury.nhs.uk) if you would like a reference list.

Author: Angela Allen  
Role: Sister  
Date written: June 2010  
Last reviewed: May 2015  
Review date: May 2018  
Version: 1.1  
Code: PI0564

# Skin-prick testing

## Why do I need to have this done?

Your doctor wants you to have this test done to see if allergy plays a part in your symptoms. This is necessary because it can affect the choice of treatment you will receive.

## Where will it be done?

In the Ear Nose and Throat Department, at Salisbury District Hospital by a specially trained nurse.

## What does it involve?

You will have 12 small drops of liquid placed on your forearm next to a strip of numbers. A tiny scratch in each drop will ensure that the allergen in the liquid penetrates the top layer of skin. The drops will then be removed. The test takes about 15 minutes to work during which time you must not cover, rub or scratch your arm. You can sit in the waiting area for this period of time.

After 15 minutes you will be called back by the nurse, who will read the test results. At least one of the areas will have become raised – possibly with a red area around it – rather like a stinging-nettle reaction. This reaction is called a wheal, and how many other wheals appear will depend on your immune system. You will be told the results of the test during your visit and be given information leaflets if necessary.

## What will I be tested for?

We test for airborne allergens such as trees, weeds, corn pollen and grass. We also test for house-dust mite, cat, dog, horse and mould. There are no food allergens in the test.

## Do I need any preparation before the allergy test?

Yes – you should stop taking antihistamine tablets for 3 days before the test. You may continue to use nasal sprays or drops. You should not put any cream on your arm on the day of the test.

## Questions?

We hope this leaflet has helped to explain the skin-prick test. If you have any questions or concerns about the test, these may be answered by phoning extension 4325, where a member of the ENT team will be happy to help you.

**Ear Nose and Throat Department**

 **01722 336262 ext 4325**