

Patient information factsheet

Photopatch testing

Your dermatology (skin) doctor has referred you for photopatch testing for your skin condition. We hope this factsheet will help to answer any questions you may have.

What is photopatch testing?

Photopatch testing is a series of tests to find out whether or not you are allergic to common ingredients in sunscreens or cosmetics when you are in sunlight. There are two parts to your allergy testing; 'patch testing' where we look at allergies to ingredients that are applied to the skin (sunscreens), and 'photo testing' where we look into allergies caused by ultraviolet (UV) light. Photopatch testing combines both tests.

Before your photopatch testing

- **Do** make sure that you have the week free to attend all of your appointments.
- **Do** let us know in advance if you take immunosuppressant medication such as Ciclosporin, Prednisolone, Azathioprine or an injectable treatment for your skin condition (Biologics).
- **Do not** sunbathe in the four weeks before your testing
- **Do not** engage in physical activity such as sports or gardening, for example, during your photopatch testing week.
- **Do not** throw away any products that you think may have caused a reaction. Please bring any products that you use regularly so that we can test them.

When you attend for your appointment, please make sure you are wearing a close weave, dark-coloured, long sleeve top and trousers. The top should be a front buttoning blouse or shirt.

Your photopatch testing week

You will have **three** appointments during your photopatch testing week. You may also have additional tests during this week. You should wear a close weave, dark-coloured, long sleeve, front buttoning top and trousers to all three of your appointments.

On **Monday**, please come to the dermatology department for your first appointment. We will need to check whether your skin is sensitive to ultraviolet A (UVA) light.

A nurse will then take you to the ultraviolet light treatment room, also in the dermatology department, where we will give you protective goggles and a visor to wear. The nurse will then ask you to stand in a cubicle around the same size as a shower cubicle where we will give you a test dose of UVA light. This will take approximately 20 minutes.

After this, a nurse will take you to the patch test clinic room where they will apply a small amount of each patch test allergen using plasters on your upper and middle back. This process should take approximately 30 minutes. You will need to keep these plasters on for 48 hours. You will not be able to shower or do any significant physical activity or exercise during this period. Do not expose your skin to sunlight for a week during your treatment.

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On **Wednesday**, a nurse will take you to the patch test clinic room first where they will take off the plasters. They will check your skin to see if you have had any reactions since your appointment on Monday, and mark your skin with a pen to identify the location of each one. They will then take you to the ultraviolet light treatment room where you will have a dose of UVA light shone onto the skin over half of the removed patches on your upper back. Only half of the removed patches are exposed because a reaction to allergens may be triggered by exposure to UV light. To prove this, we will apply two sets of allergens, one with exposure to UV light and one not exposed.

On **Friday**, we will invite you back to the patch test room where we will check your reactions to the patches for the final time. The consultant will check your results and suggest any treatments, if needed. The consultant may also decide whether you will require further testing.

Seeking and acting on patient feedback is key to improving the quality of our services. The Friends and Family Test gives you the opportunity to give your view on the care or treatment you've received. You can complete the survey online by visiting <http://www.uhs.nhs.uk/PatientsAndVisitors/Patientexperienceandsatisfaction/Friends-and-Family-Test.aspx> and entering the password **rhmo** when prompted.

Contact us

If there is any reason you cannot attend, you must let us know in advance. You can contact us on Monday to Friday, 8am to 5pm (Thursday 8am to 2pm only) by telephone on the following numbers:

Booking administrator **023 8054 0179**
Patch test nurses **023 8054 0204**
Dr Pees' secretary **023 8054 0205**

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If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audiotape, please telephone 023 8120 4688 for help.