

MetALLS Patch Skin Testing

What is MetALLs patch skin testing?

Your doctor has suggested you have patch testing as part of the evaluation at National Jewish Health. Patch testing is a method of placing small amounts of different substances, including metals and cements, on the skin for 2 days, and examining the skin for a reaction for several days after. A positive reaction is red, raised, and often itchy. This method helps to diagnose a metal or cement allergy and will help your doctor identify the best treatment for you.

How do you get ready for the test?

Please follow these directions when getting ready for this test:

- The skin of your back and arms should be clear for 2 weeks before the test **if possible**.
- Avoid exposing your skin to the sun for **1 week** before the testing.
- Stop applying topical steroids to your back or arms for **one month** before your appointment.
- If your doctor agrees, stop taking oral steroids for **one week** before the test. Call us if you have questions about the dose or can't stop all oral steroids.
- Do not apply any ointments, creams or lotions to your back or arms for **24 hours** before the appointment.
- Shower before your first visit, as you won't be able to take one for the next 2 days while the patches are on your back.
- **Continue to take all your other medications as you normally do.**

What is done during the test?

On your first visit, we will place several panels of patch tests on your skin, usually the back. These are four or more rectangular panels with small amounts of pre-applied allergens. Adhesive around the patches will adhere the panels to the skin.

After two days, you will remove the panels at home and photograph the skin reactions.

You will come back again one or two days later, after the panels are removed, to assess the skin reactions. 30% of positive reactions aren't visible when the patches are first removed.

The entire series of tests will take about a week to complete. You will typically have an answer on the last day of testing, although the blood tests for nickel and cobalt allergy take about 2 weeks for the results. We encourage you to get your blood drawn 2 weeks before the patch testing to have all the results available at the last visit.

What should you do once the patch tests are in place?

Please follow these directions while the patch test panels are in place:

- Keep the panels and the skin around the panels dry during the two days the panels are on your back.

- You can take a shallow bath or sponge bath but avoid getting your back wet. However, you can take a shower or bath after the panels are removed.
- Avoid physical activities that may cause sweating or excessive movement during the two days the patches remain applied.
- You can take Benadryl or any other antihistamine for itching, as it won't affect the patch test results.
- If you have too much itching or burning under a particular patch, you may cut it out from the rest of the panel, take a photo of the area on your phone, and call to let us know, (303-398-1355, Option 4.) Bring in the photo for your next visit.
- After 2 days, remove the panels at home, reinforce the purple markings around the corners, and take a photo of the skin reactions with your cell phone to bring to the final visit.

How long will the test take?

You will visit us twice during the patch testing. The initial visit will take about 1 hour, and the subsequent visit will take up to 30 minutes.

How do you get to your test?

On the day of your scheduled test, report to the Check-In Desk in the Adult Clinic.

If you have questions, please call our program representative at 303-398-1679.

Visit our website for more information about support groups, clinical trials and lifestyle information.

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NOTE: This information is provided to you as an educational service of National Jewish Health. It is not meant to be a substitute for consulting with your own physician.

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