



Imtiaz Ahmed, M.D.

Diplomate of American Board of Allergy & Immunology

A Conjoint Board of American Board of Pediatrics and the American Board of Internal Medicine

Telephone (407) 846-4000 • Fax (407) 846-4808 • www.drahmed.com
903 West Oak Street 3106 17th Street
Kissimmee, FL 34741 St. Cloud, FL 34769

WHAT IS PATCH TESTING

What can cause a skin rash?

Many different things can cause a skin rash; skin rashes are often recognized by reddening, swelling, drying, or cracking of the skin.

The medical term for this redness, swelling, drying, or cracking is Dermatitis. Common causes of Dermatitis can be found both at work and at home and include jewelry, plants, chemicals, and clothing.

What is Contact Dermatitis?

Dermatitis caused by substances that come in contact with the skin is called Contact Dermatitis. Contact Dermatitis is a common problem that affects millions of people. Among the common substances known to cause Contact Dermatitis are soaps, rubber, nickel, household and industrial chemicals, cosmetics, and perfumes.

There are two types of Contact Dermatitis: allergic and irritant. Because both can have similar characteristics (such as color or location on the body) and can be caused by the same substance, it is often difficult to Determine whether Contact Dermatitis is allergic or irritant just by looking at it.

What is allergic Contact Dermatitis?

Allergic Contact Dermatitis is a skin rash or dermatitis that occurs when substances you are allergic to come in contact with your skin.

Substances that cause allergic reactions are called allergens.

Common allergens may include:

- *metals in jewelry
- *cosmetics or fragrances (perfume, aftershave, etc)
- *antibiotic ointments or creams
- *rubber boots.

What is Irritant Contact Dermatitis?

Irritant Contact Dermatitis is a rash or inflammation that is caused by exposure to a substance that damages the skin.

Common irritants may include:

- Skin cleansers
- Detergents
- Solvents (turpentine, gasoline)
- Acids and alkalis (lime, bleach, battery acid)
- Oils (machine oils).

How can my health care provider determine the cause of my Contact dermatitis?

After your health care provider examines you and establishes that your rash may be Contact Dermatitis, he or she may suggest that you undergo a patch test to help distinguish the specific type and causes of the Contact Dermatitis.

What is a patch test?

A patch test is a skin test used by Dr. Ahmed to help determine whether your Contact Dermatitis is caused by an allergen or an irritant. A patch test also helps identify exactly which substances is causing your dermatitis so that you may avoid exposure to the source of your skin rash.

When should patch testing be done?

Dr. Ahmed may choose to patch test in order to help determine if your skin rash is contact dermatitis.



Imtiaz Ahmed, M.D.

Diplomate of American Board of Allergy & Immunology

A Conjoint Board of American Board of Pediatrics and the American Board of Internal Medicine

Telephone (407) 846-4000 • Fax (407) 846-4808 • www.drahmed.com
903 West Oak Street 3106 17th Street
Kissimmee, FL 34741 St. Cloud, FL 34769

How is patch testing done?

A number of different allergens that may be causing your rash are applied in very small amounts to a small area of skin on your upper back, which is then covered so it's watertight. The patch test is usually left on your back for 2 days. When you return to your health care provider's office, he or she looks at your back to see which allergens caused a reaction. Dr. Ahmed may want to see you again for a second reading of your patches up to 1 week after application.

What will I need to do if I have a patch test?

Before you have a patch test performed, you should:

- NOT use topical corticosteroids on the test area for 1 to 2 weeks before the test.
- Minimize sun exposure on test area before the test.
- Not apply lotions, creams, or ointments to test area before the test.

During the test period, you should:

- Keep the patch test area dry. Avoid activities that cause perspiration and do Not take a bath or shower until after your health care provider removes the patch test. You may sponge bathe around the patch test site.
- Wear loose clothing.
- Our office immediately in the test site itches or burns severely.

What does a patch test tell me?

A patch test is a reliable way to determine if you have allergic contact dermatitis and what is causing it. If a skin test area is swollen and red with tiny blisters, it may indicate that you are allergic to that substance. If you are sensitive to one of the allergens in the patch test, your health care provider will give you information about the allergen, what you should do to avoid contact with the allergen, and what alternative substances you can use.

If your patch test results are negative, it indicates that you are not allergic to the substances tested. By your skin rash, your health care provider can focus on other causes of your condition.

How do I prevent my contact dermatitis from occurring again?

The best treatment for allergic contact dermatitis is to avoid the allergen(s) that causes the rash. After Dr. Ahmed tells you the name(s) of the allergen(s) you are allergic to, you should read the ingredient list on the labels of products before purchasing or using them. The following chart lists items that often contain common allergens.

Common Sources of allergens

Toiletries: Cosmetics, perfumes, shampoos, permanent and semi-permanent hair dyes, soaps, creams, lotions, ointments, other skin care products.

Medical Items: Cough syrup, lozenges, topical anesthetics, antibiotic creams, topical fungicides, eye drops, ear drops, nose drops, paste bandages, other medicated creams and ointments, dermatological creams.

Rubber products: Shoes, gloves, elastic, tires, handles, hoses.

Food products: Flavorings, candies, chewing gum.

Metals: Metal-plated products, costume jewelry.

Building/ industrial supplies: Cement, industrial chemicals, glues, adhesives, sealants, paint, industrial anticorrosive agents.

Miscellaneous: Fragrances, leather goods, pine oil cleaners, pesticides, veterinary products, furniture.