

# ALLERGY TESTING: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## Allergies Are One Of The Most Common Health Conditions In The U.S.

### 50 Million Americans Have Allergies

Finding out the cause of the allergy is the first step in effective allergy treatment. This resource will explain why is it important to get an allergy test if you have allergy symptoms and common types of allergy testing.

#### 01 | Why Get Tested?

Allergic reactions may vary from mild to life-threatening; therefore it is important to pinpoint the root cause of the allergy symptom in order to establish care. Based on the allergy and severity, the roadmap for care may vary.

#### 02 | Allergy Test Types

Allergy testing involves having a skin or blood test to find out what substance or allergen, may trigger an allergic response.

Skin tests are more common because they are rapid, reliable and can be generally less expensive. A skin test involves placing the suspected allergen on or below the skin. There are three types of skin tests including:

- **Skin prick test** - This test is performed by placing a drop of solution containing a possible allergen on the skin and a series of scratches or needle pricks which allows the solution to enter the skin. If the skin develops a red, raised itchy area, it usually means that the person is allergic to that allergen and this is referred to as a positive reaction.
- **Intradermal test** - During this test, a small amount of the allergen solution is injected into the skin. An intradermal allergy test may be done when a substance does not cause a reaction in the skin prick test but is still suspected as an allergen for that person. The intradermal test is more

sensitive than the skin prick test, but is more often positive in people who do not have symptoms to that allergen, known as false-positive test results.

- **Skin patch test** - For a skin patch test, the allergen solution is placed on a pad that is taped to the skin for 24 to 72 hours. This test is used to detect a skin allergy called contact dermatitis

Although blood tests are less common and they are not as sensitive, they are often used to test those who are not able to have a skin test. The most widely used allergy blood test is:

- **ELISA/EIA** – This test is used to detect the presence of a type of antibody called immunoglobulin E, which the body may make in a response to allergens. Those who have allergies and/or asthma tend to have elevated levels of immunoglobulin E.

There are many options available for allergy testing as well as treatment options. Speak with your medical provider to establish a plan for diagnosis and treatment options. For additional allergy resources visit: <http://www.mayoclinic.org>

### Did You Know?

*1 in 5 Americans are affected by allergies*

#### References

<http://www.aaaai.org/conditions-and-treatments/library/at-a-glance/allergy-testing.aspx>

[https://www.questdiagnostics.com/dms/Documents/Ot/2011\\_QD\\_AllergyReport.pdf](https://www.questdiagnostics.com/dms/Documents/Ot/2011_QD_AllergyReport.pdf)