

## Patch Test Clinic Information for Private Patients

Your dermatologist has recommended patch testing to investigate your skin complaint. This leaflet explains what this involves and answers some common questions.

### Why are patch tests done?

Patch tests help find out if a rash is due to an allergy to an external substance which has come into contact with the skin. This is called contact allergy. Many things can cause contact allergy: e.g. nickel in jewellery, rubber gloves, perfumes, and chemicals in cosmetics and medicaments.

### When are the patch test clinics held?

Dr Wakelin's patch test clinics are held at **St Mary's Hospital, Paddington**. Please report to the Lindo Wing which is the private wing 15 minutes prior to your first appointment. In order to complete the tests, you will need to make **3 visits** to hospital in a single week.

### What happens at each visit?

- On your 1st consultation (**Monday** afternoon), small quantities of substances are placed on your skin under hypoallergenic dressings ('patches'). These are usually put on the upper back. This is painless, but the patches feel slightly sticky and awkward at first. It is recommended that you wear old or black clothing as a black marker is used and may cause staining.
- Bishops Wood patients can have their 2<sup>nd</sup> visit at **Bishops Wood Hospital**, Northwood on the **Wednesday** and Lindo Wing patients at **St Mary's** on the **Thursday**. At this visit your skin will be examined to see if there are any reactions.
- On your 3<sup>rd</sup> visit (**Friday** afternoon) your skin will be examined again. (This visit is needed because contact allergy reactions may take several days to appear).  
Dr Wakelin will let you know if you are allergic to anything that has been tested, and explain what steps can be taken to try and avoid this substance in the future.

You will need to **keep your back dry** from Monday until the tests finish on Friday.

### Should I bring anything with me?

Please bring along any **creams** you have been using, both those prescribed by your doctor and things you have bought, as well as any cosmetics or toiletries you think have caused the problem or made it worse. If your rash affects the hands, please bring your **gloves**, as it may be necessary to test you with small samples of these.

If you work with **chemicals** such as glues, oils or metal working fluids, please bring small samples of these along and the material data sheets if possible.

### Do any forms of medication spoil the tests?

You can take your medication as usual during patch tests, including antihistamines. However, the tests should be deferred if you are taking a large dose of steroids or have recently had a course of light therapy, and they should not be performed during pregnancy.

### Skin prick tests

If you are also having skin prick tests carried out, you will need to discontinue antihistamine tablets for at least 48 hours before hand.

### Further advice

If you would like any further advice or information, please contact Dr Wakelin's secretary Debra on 07759 236588.