

### **Skin Prick Test Patient Information Leaflet**

#### **1. What is Skin Prick Test (SPT)?**

SPT helps determining whether a person is sensitive to various allergens, such as food, drugs and aeroallergens.

#### **2. Why SPT is ordered?**

Your doctor might recommend SPT if you have symptoms that could be caused by an allergy. Conditions which a SPT is indicated include asthma, rhinoconjunctivitis, food or drug allergy, latex allergy etc.

#### **3. How is the procedure performed?**

A drop of the allergen is applied on your skin and a tiny prick is made through the drop into your skin using a sterile metallic or plastic lancet. If you are allergic to any of the substances, itchy red bumps usually show up within 15 to 20 minutes. The bumps go away in a few hours.

#### **4. What are the precautions needed?**

You will be asked to avoid taking certain medicines as much as possible for up to 3 weeks before SPT. Please discuss with your doctor if the medications that you were taking contains any of the medications listed below. Please discuss with your doctor about the risks of stopping these medications. If you were unable to stop these medications, please discuss with your doctor whether you should proceed or postpone the SPT.

| <b>Class</b>            | <b>Drug</b>                                                               | <b>Suggested withholding Period (days)</b> |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>Antihistamines@</b>  | <i>First-generation</i><br>Chlorpheniramine,<br>Diphenhydramine           | 2                                          |
|                         | <i>Second-generation</i><br>Cetirizine, Loratadine                        | 7                                          |
|                         | <i>Third-generation</i><br>Desloratadine, Levocetirizine,<br>Fexofenadine | 7                                          |
| <b>H-2 antagonist</b>   | Cimetidine, Ranitidine,<br>Famotidine                                     | 1-2                                        |
| <b>Glucocorticoids*</b> | Topical steroids                                                          | 7-21                                       |
| <b>Other drugs#</b>     | Topical calcineurin inhibitors,<br>e.g., tacrolimus                       | 7                                          |

@Antihistamine nasal sprays, which can be absorbed systemically, need to be withheld for 3 days.

\*Oral corticosteroids have minimal effects on the results on skin tests although effects of long-term use of high-dose corticosteroids are controversial.  
#A report found that topical pimecrolimus does not significantly diminish skin test reactions.

##### **5. What are the risks of SPT?**

Skin prick testing is an extremely safe procedure, with minimal discomfort. The expected reaction to a skin prick test is a localised wheal and flare. Delayed local skin swelling (the late phase response) which is often tender or painful may uncommonly occur. Systemic reactions such as anaphylaxis have been reported, but large studies have shown that it is exceedingly rare.