

DRUG SAFETY CLINIC

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DRUG ALLERGY TESTING

Your doctor at the Drug Safety Clinic has determined that drug allergy testing is appropriate for you. **You will be at the Clinic for 6 to 8 hours** on the day of your testing. This observation period is for your safety. **Please do not ask to be seen/discharged earlier.** If you cannot stay for this period of observation, we will not be able to send a report to your physician regarding your test results.

Cancelling or rescheduling your appointment

If you need to cancel/reschedule your appointment, please call us at least 48 hours before the appointment, **or a \$50 rebooking fee may be charged.** Due to space limitations at the clinic, **only those patients requiring assistance should be accompanied during testing.**

What types of allergy testing can be done?

Prick and intradermal skin testing: Prick and/or intradermal skin testing are often used to test for specific drugs such as penicillin, local anesthetics, latex, sulfonamide antibiotics (“sulfas”), and others.

With prick testing, a small amount of the drug is placed on your skin, usually your lower arm. The skin is then pricked. If you are allergic to the drug, you will get a large bump and redness where the skin is pricked. For intradermal testing, a small amount of the drug is injected under the skin, creating a little bump, usually on the upper arm. If you are allergic to the drug, the bump will get bigger and redder where the needle has gone under the skin.

Oral Challenge: With some drugs, skin testing is not appropriate, and an oral challenge is used. This is for medications such as aspirin, codeine, ibuprofen, morphine, and several others. As well, an oral challenge is often used along with skin testing, if skin test results are negative.

For an oral challenge, you will receive a regular dose of the drug and then you will be observed under the care of a physician for **6 to 8 hours.**

What are possible reactions during testing?

Local reactions: Local reactions, which usually present as redness and swelling at the injection site, can occur either immediately or hours or days after skin testing. Local reactions do not result in a more serious reaction. If they occur after you leave the clinic, please call us and take photos if possible. Email these to us at drugsafety@sunnybrook.ca.

Systemic reactions: Systemic reactions, (or whole body) reactions, are less common than local reactions. Systemic reactions are usually mild and respond rapidly to medications, such as antihistamines. Symptoms can include nasal congestion, hives or sneezing. A serious systemic reaction, called anaphylaxis, may occur extremely rarely after skin testing or oral challenge. Symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction include hives, swelling, wheezing, shortness of breath, nausea, dizziness and other symptoms. The staff at the Drug Safety Clinic is trained to monitor and treat such reactions.

Do I need to stop any medication before testing?

Antihistamines can interfere with the skin test results. If you are taking an antihistamine, you will need to stop the medication at least 3 days before coming in for your testing.

If you are on a beta-blocker and/or an ACE-inhibitor (these are medications for your heart or for high blood pressure) and take these regularly in the morning, do not take them the morning of the test; instead, take them when you get home. If you have any questions about your medications, please contact the Drug Safety Clinic before your test.

All other medications, including asthma puffers and prednisone, should not be stopped.

Examples of antihistamines or drugs that have antihistamine properties include:

- amitriptyline (Elavil)
- brompheniramine (Dimetapp)
- cetirizine (Reactine)
- chlorpheniramine (Triaminic)
- cyproheptadine (Periactin)
- desloratadine (Aerius)
- dexbrompheniramine (Drixoral)
- dimenhydrinate (Gravol)
- diphenhydramine (Benadryl)
- doxepin (Sinequan)
- doxylamine (Nighttime, NyQuil)
- fexofenadine (Allegra)
- hydroxyzine (Atarax)
- loratadine (Claritin)
- maprotiline (Ludiomil)
- mirtazapine (Remeron)
- promethazine (Histanil, Phenergan)
- trimipramine (Surmontil)
- triprolidine (Actifed)

This list does not contain all of the products available in Canada. Check with your pharmacist or doctor, or contact the Drug Safety Clinic, if you have any questions.

Can I eat before drug allergy testing? Eat a regular breakfast before coming for testing and bring a snack/lunch with you.

What should I wear on the day of testing? Wear a short-sleeved top and comfortable clothing. Bring layers, as the clinic can be very warm or very cold.

What else should I bring on testing day? Bring a book or work to do as you will be **kept under observation for 6 to 8 hours**. WiFi internet access is also available.

Should I cancel my appointment if I am not feeling well? If you feel ill or have a rash, contact the clinic to reschedule your appointment.

What about parking on testing day?

You can park all day for a maximum of \$26. Before coming into the clinic to start your testing, it is advisable to pay the full \$26 and place the receipt on your dashboard.

Sunnybrook is a fragrance-free hospital.

Please do not wear perfume or scented products.