

DRUG SAFETY CLINIC

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YOUR DRUG ALLERGY TESTING APPOINTMENT: 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** after your scheduled appointment time on the testing day. This observation period is for your safety. **Please do not ask to be discharged earlier.**

To cancel/reschedule your appointment: Please contact us at least 48 hours before the appointment, or a \$50 rebooking fee may be charged. **If you feel sick or have a rash:** Contact us to reschedule your appointment.

No-shows: If you miss an appointment without notifying us in advance, we will contact your physician to advise that **all future appointments have been cancelled.**

Space is limited: Only patients who need assistance should be accompanied during testing.

WHAT HAPPENS ON TESTING DAY: After you check in, the nurse will call you and will take your vital signs (blood pressure, pulse and breathing sounds, and expiratory lung capacity). She will then administer your drug test. The type of testing we offer depends on the drug class and usually involves **skin testing and/or a challenge dose of the drug.** For more details, see the Drug Safety Clinic website.

Skin testing: With **prick testing**, a small amount of the drug is placed on your skin, usually your lower arm and the skin is then pricked. For **intradermal testing**, a small amount of the drug is injected under the skin, which may create a small bump, usually on the upper arm. If you are allergic to the drug, the skin test bump will get bigger and redder.

Skin testing followed by challenge dose: Where available, following a **negative** skin test, you will receive a dose of a drug to confirm the skin testing results.

Challenge dose alone: With some drugs, skin testing is not available, and you will receive one or more oral doses of a medication to see if you can tolerate it.

POSSIBLE REACTIONS DURING TESTING:

Local reactions: Local reactions, usually redness and/or 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.

Systemic reactions: Systemic reactions (or whole body) reactions, are not common, 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 a challenge dose. Symptoms of an anaphylactic reaction can include hives, swelling, wheezing, shortness of breath, nausea, and dizziness. The staff at the Drug Safety Clinic is trained to monitor and treat such reactions.

AFTER THE TESTING: At the end of the day you will be discharged by our Clinic specialist, who will write a reporting letter to your physician. If you are allergic to a medication, we will tell you which drug(s) to avoid and may provide information sheets. In some cases, we may

recommend further testing. After you have completed all testing appointments at our Clinic, we will recommend a medical identification bracelet that shows any medication allergy.

Although rare, it is possible for you to have a **reaction after leaving our Clinic**. Be alert for any unusual symptoms that occur up to 48 hours later, which could be related to the medication you received at our Clinic. If the symptoms are severe or getting worse, go to a hospital emergency department or walk-in clinic to see a physician to be assessed and treated. Contact us and if possible email us photos that show any reaction. We will get back you and, where appropriate will write a further letter to your referring physician.

COMMON QUESTIONS: PREPARING FOR YOUR TESTING APPOINTMENT

Can I take my usual medications before I come to the appointment? Generally, you can take your usual medications unless we have asked you to stop them on the day of testing, or for a few days before the testing. Always check with us at least 10 days before your testing appointment.

Certain drugs interfere with our testing: Antihistamines or medications that have antihistamine properties (e.g., some antidepressants or anti-anxiety medications) can interfere with our testing. Please stop these as follows:

- **Antihistamines: Stop 3-5 days before coming in for testing.** Examples: Bilastine (Blexten®), Brompheniramine, Cetirizine (Reactine®), Chlorpheniramine, Desloratadine (Aerius®), Dimenhydrinate (Gravol®), Diphenhydramine (Benadryl®), Doxylamine, Fexofenadine (Allegra®), Hydroxyzine (Atarax®), Loratadine (Claritin®), Ranitidine (Zantac®), Rupatadine (Rupall®). Antihistamines may also be in cough & cold products and over-the-counter sleep aids). For more detailed information, see the Drug Safety Clinic website.
- **Certain antidepressants or anti-anxiety medications:** Check with the Drug Safety Clinic if you take one or more of these medications, as some (but not all) can interfere with our testing. For more detailed information on specific drugs, see the Drug Safety Clinic website.
- **Beta-blockers and/or ACE-inhibitors** for high blood pressure: Do not take these the morning of the test. Beta-blockers could interfere with treatment of a reaction, and ACE-inhibitors can make some reactions, like swelling, worse. You can take these medications after dinner that evening if you are symptom-free.

All other medications, including asthma puffers and prednisone, can be taken.

COMMON QUESTIONS

Can I eat before and during drug allergy testing? There are no eating restrictions. Eat a regular breakfast before coming for testing and bring a snack/lunch with you. Don't take the drugs that we give you on an empty stomach.

What should I wear on the day of testing? As the Clinic can be very warm or cold, bring layers and wear comfortable clothing. Wear a short-sleeved top to facilitate skin testing.

What else should I bring on testing day? Bring a book or computer. We offer free WiFi internet access.

What about parking on testing day? All-day parking costs \$26 (subject to change).

Will the clinic contact me to remind me about my test? You will receive an automated telephone reminder 28 days and 7 days before your appointment. Please make sure that we have your current phone number, and *contact us to tell us if you have a new number*.

Sunnybrook is a fragrance-free hospital.

Please do not wear perfume or scented products or lotions