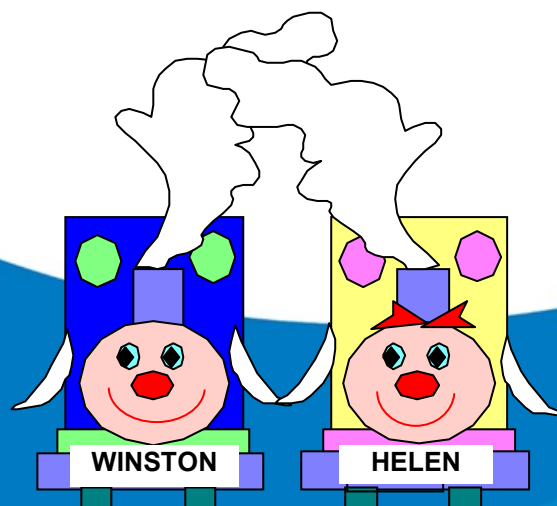


# Skin Prick Allergy Test

This leaflet can be made available  
in alternative languages / formats on request.

如有需要，本传单可提供其他语言/版式  
此單張的其他語言/格式版本可按要求提供

Na żądanie ta ulotka może zostać udostępniona  
w innych językach/formatach.



## The Reasons for the Procedure

A skin prick test is one of the tests that a doctor or specialist nurse can request to help him/her to diagnose and treat the symptoms of allergy. The child's symptoms may be related to:

- Asthma
- Allergic Rhinitis (Hay Fever)
- Eczema
- Food Allergy

The skin prick test takes about 5-10 minutes to perform and the results are available within 15 minutes. Thus the test is quick, reliable, convenient and safe.

Your child should not take any antihistamines on the day of the test and for the 3 days leading up to the test as this would affect the results. The skin prick allergy test can also be problematic for children with Eczema as this can sometime flare the skin and make the eczema worse. It is also difficult in younger children as they cannot keep still long enough for the test to be done. Thus your specialist may suggest that a blood allergy test is more suitable for you or your child.

We cannot test for every allergen during skin prick tests thus if we do not have the specific allergen available you or your child will need to have the 'blood' allergy test instead. This is outlined in another patient information leaflet.

## How is a skin prick test carried out?

After discussing the test with the specialist the names of the allergens or corresponding numbers for the allergens will be written on the forearm with a special water soluble marker pen.

Each little bottle of 'allergen' is lined up in the same order of the allergens written on the skin ready to apply to the marked area. A tiny drop of the allergen is placed next to each marked allergen. Finally a drop of Negative and Positive control solution is also applied to the marked area. A sterile lancet is used to gently prick through the allergen using light pressure. This allows the allergen to penetrate the outer layer of skin and helps to facilitate the allergic response.

After all the allergens, the positive and the negative controls have been pricked; the allergens are blotted dry. You or your child will then need to wait 15minutes for the results to be available. During this time the child may be able to play or do some pastime activity while the specialist discusses on-going management.

Your child will be aware of some itching straight away as the positive control should start to itch and develop a wheal (skin flair). This is not usually problematic and not distressing in any way. The Positive and Negative controls are used to ensure the test is of good quality.

After 15 minutes the reaction (wheal or skin flare) will be measured and copied (using tape) and transferred to the clinical records. Any wheal over 3mm in size is considered as a positive response and thus shows that you or your child has been '**sensitised**' to the particular allergen. The results will be clearly explained to you prior to leaving clinic. Allergen avoidance literature will be provided as appropriate.

## The benefits of the procedure

The allergens thought to be causing you or your child symptoms may be identified.

## The risks & discomforts of the procedure

Sometimes the child may find the test uncomfortable. Very rarely a more severe allergic reaction can occur but this is 'extremely rare'. The skin prick tests are also always undertaken in a safe environment and conducted by skilled professionals. Antihistamines will be administered to you or your child on completion of the test to alleviate any discomfort.

## Alternatives to the procedure

It may be advised that a (blood) allergy test may be more appropriate instead of a skin prick test due to the type of the allergy you or your child is thought to have. If this is the case your doctor or nurse will explain why this is required.

You do not need both a 'skin prick test' and a 'blood allergy test' as they give us the same information. You or your child will just need one or the other.

## Consequences of not having the procedure

The allergen causing you or your child's symptoms may not be identified making management difficult.

Further information is available at:

[www.allergyuk.org](http://www.allergyuk.org)

**If you have any further questions please contact your child's consultant via their secretary via the hospital switchboard. The secretaries are available Monday to Friday 9.00 am to 5.00 pm**

**If you need to contact the Department outside of these hours please phone either:**

**Ward 3F      0151 430 1616**

**Ward 4F      0151 430 1791**

Whiston Hospital  
Warrington Road,  
Prescot, Merseyside, L35 5DR  
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