











DIAGNOSING AN ALLERGY








Diagnosing an Allergy

Identifying the Cause

	<p>The first step in diagnosing an allergy is to find the cause of the problem.</p>
	<p>It can be difficult because it can look like other conditions.</p>
	<p>If you think you are allergic, write down your symptoms.</p>
	<p>Also, pay attention to how you feel.</p>
	<p>You can ask someone to help you with this.</p>



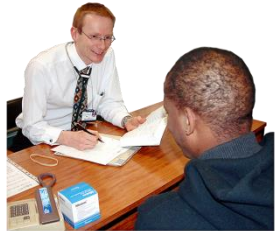

	<p>Pay attention to when your symptoms happen:</p>
	<p>Do they happen at a certain time of the day?</p>
	<p>Do they happen at certain times of the year?</p>
	<p>Do they happen at night or during the day?</p>
	<p>Do they happen when you eat certain food?</p>

	<p>Where your symptoms happen:</p>
	<p>In your house or garden?</p>
	<p>Do they happen when you are near animals?</p>
	<p>Do symptoms improve when you are on holiday?</p>

	<p>How often do your symptoms happen?</p>
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Allergy Testing

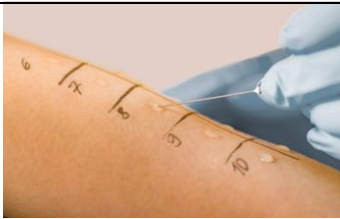
What do you need to do?

	<p>First, contact your GP.</p>
	<p>Tell your GP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• when symptoms happen,• how often• and what you think might be causing them.
	<p>Your GP can offer advice and treatment for small allergies.</p>
	<p>If your allergy is more severe or if it's hard to find the cause, you may need your allergy to be tested.</p>



Your GP will refer you to a specialist allergy service.

Skin prick testing



Skin prick testing is one of the more common allergy tests.

This test scratches the skin instead of piercing it.





No blood is taken out and it is very safe.






A small drop of a liquid that has things that you may be allergic to is dropped onto your skin.





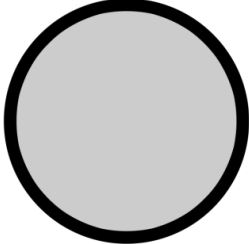
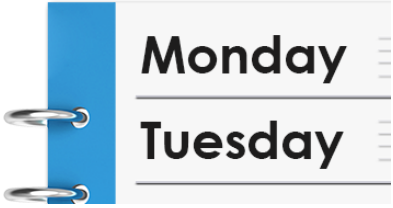
Your skin is then gently scratched so that the allergens react with your skin.

	<p>If you are allergic, a red bump will appear in 15 minutes.</p>
	<p>Do NOT take antihistamines before the test!</p>

Blood test

	<p>Blood tests can be used to see if you are allergic to something.</p>
	<p>A sample of blood is taken to a laboratory.</p>
	<p>It will be examined for allergies.</p>

Patch test

	<p>Patch tests are used to find contact dermatitis.</p>
	<p>Contact dermatitis is a skin condition that happens when your skin touches something you're allergic to.</p>
	<p>A small amount of what you are allergic to is put in a metal disk.</p>
	<p>The disk is taped to your skin for 48 hours (about 2 days).</p>



Your skin is monitored for a reaction.

Elimination diet



If you might be allergic to a certain food, you may be asked not to eat that food.







After a few weeks, you may be asked to eat the food again to see if you are allergic to it.






To see if your allergy needs treatment, you need to do that with a healthcare professional.



Challenge testing


	<p>This test MUST be done with help from a doctor.</p>
	<p>During the test, you will be given food you may be allergic to.</p>
	<p>This test is very risky as it may cause an allergic reaction.</p>
	<p>Challenge testing MUST be done in a clinic where an allergic reaction can be treated if this happens.</p>

Allergy testing kit

	<p>Allergy testing kits are NOT recommended.</p>
	<p>They are not as good as NHS kits or ones from private clinics.</p>
	<p>Kits must be given by a healthcare professional.</p>

Advice

	<p>Write down any questions or concerns you may have about testing before the appointment.</p>
	<p>Don't forget to ask your questions at the beginning of your appointment.</p>

	<p>With the right support, people with learning disabilities can overcome things they find difficult and live the life they choose!</p>
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All Photos by PHOTOSYMBOLS.

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