

- A negative reaction- the skin where the drop of allergen has been pricked remains normal. This means your child is less likely to be allergic to the substance.

### What happens after the test?

If you are attending a consultant appointment on the day of the skin prick test the results will be explained to you at this appointment.

If it is a nurse-led clinic the results will be discussed at your next outpatient appointment or your doctor will write to you with the results before the next appointment.

## Further information

### How to contact us

Children's Outpatient Department  
Watford General Hospital  
West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals  
NHS Trust  
Vicarage Road  
Watford  
WD18 0HB

Reception telephone no: 01923 217720

Nurses telephone no: 01923 217726

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If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 187** or email [westherts.pals@nhs.uk](mailto:westherts.pals@nhs.uk)



Language



Large  
Print



Braille



Audio

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| Authors: Paediatrics Department                 |
| Department: Acute Children's Services           |
| Ratified / review date: April 2023 / April 2026 |
| ID number: 40/2100/V2                           |



**NHS**

West Hertfordshire  
Teaching Hospitals  
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A guide to...

# Skin Prick Test (SPT)

*Information for  
Parents and Carers*



Children's Outpatient Department

## Paediatrics Department

Watford General Hospital  
Hemel Hempstead Hospital  
St Albans City Hospital

## Introduction

As part of your child's appointment, the doctor or nurse may request a Skin Prick Test (SPT). This leaflet explains what this test involves and what will happen when you and your child come to clinic. If you have any questions please speak to a member of staff caring for your child.

## Why does my child need a skin prick test?

This test will help to identify to which food or environmental trigger (allergen) your child may be allergic. An allergen is substance that causes an allergic reaction. It can help us to diagnose and monitor your child's allergies.

An allergy is when the immune system responds to an allergen such as food or pollen, as if it is a harmful substance.

This can cause the following symptoms:

- A runny nose
- Itchy eyes
- Hives (nettle type of rash, called urticaria)
- Difficulty in breathing

Skin prick testing is one of the ways to test for specific substances to see if they cause an allergic reaction.

**NB: If your child has a wheeze on the day of the appointment the skin prick test cannot be performed. Please contact the department to reschedule the appointment.**

## Inhalers

If your child uses a blue inhaler (reliever- Salbutamol) and steroid inhaler (preventer- for example Clenil) as part of their routine daily asthma management, please give the inhalers as normal on the day of the appointment.

## Antihistamine and steroid cream

Your child should not be given any antihistamine medicine or have topical steroid cream applied on the arms for four days before the skin prick test. These are oral medicines such as Piriton and Cetirizine and topical creams such as Hydrocortisone and Betnovate.

**NB: if your child needs to have antihistamine medicine four days before the test please contact the department to reschedule the appointment. The test cannot be performed if your child's skin is red or inflamed on their forearms.**

## What happens before the test?

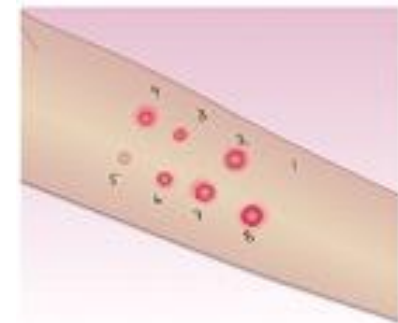
The nurse or doctor will ask about your child's medical history. You will need to give details about any allergic reactions or symptoms your child has been experiencing. You may also be asked questions about your child's:

- Current or previous illness
- Emotional and social well being
- Schooling and activities
- Lifestyle
- Foods
- Eating habits

**We will ask for you to give verbal consent before the test. This confirms that you understand and agree to a SPT for your child.**

## How will the skin prick test be performed?

A small amount of allergen is placed on the forearm. The skin under the drop is then pricked with a lancet. The lancet is a small metal stick with a very small, fine, sharp point at the end that presses the allergen onto the top layer of skin. It does not hurt and the prick does not bleed. This will be repeated for each allergen.



**After 15 minutes the nurse will check your child's skin for reaction.**

- A positive reaction – the area where the skin has been pricked becomes red and itchy. The raised swelling called a 'wheal' and is surrounded by a red area. This will fade after a few hours. This means your child is likely to be allergic to the substance.