

drops for glaucoma such as Timoptic. If you are taking medications for your heart, high blood pressure or glaucoma, please let us review medications and record them in your chart prior to testing.

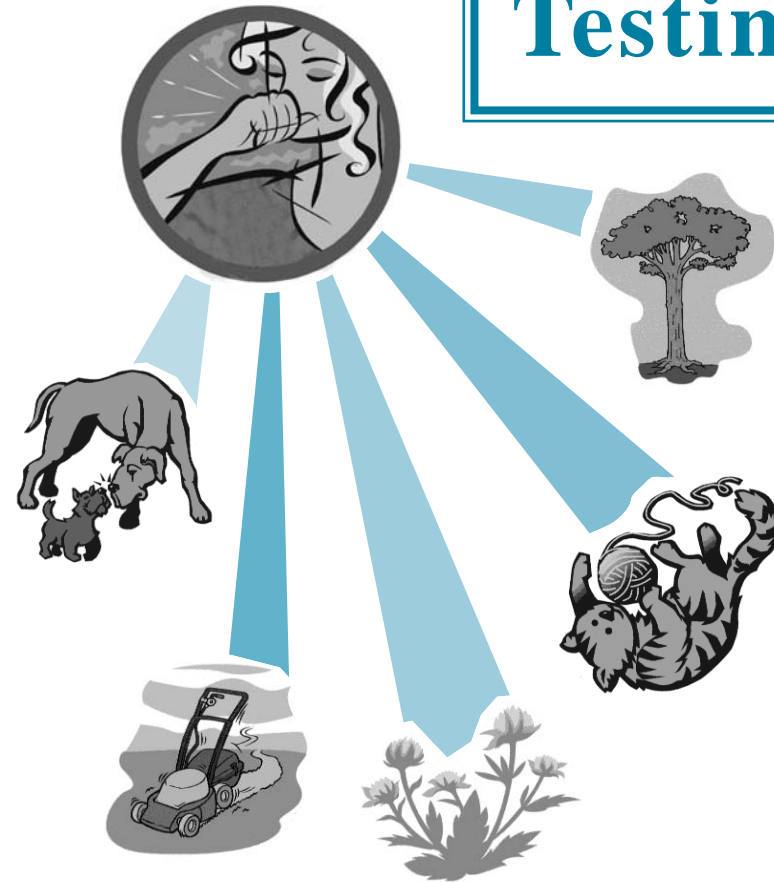
**5. You must be illness and infection free.**

You (or your child) must be free from any acute illness or infection during the testing process. If you are on antibiotics, having any difficulty with your asthma, or are suffering from a fever or infection of any kind, please notify our staff and reschedule your appointment as soon as possible. If your asthma is not under excellent control, please cancel your appointment testing and see the doctor.

**6. Take it easy on test day.**

Do not engage in strenuous activities or sports for at least one hour before each test and two hours afterwards. When you arrive at our office for testing, please sign in at the front counter and proceed back to the allergy office. If you have any questions or concerns regarding the testing process, please discuss them with our staff. The testing procedure may differ for young children.

# Allergy Testing



## ALLERGY ASTHMA CARE, P.C.

KENNETH W. BLUMENTHAL, D.O.

MATYT ADLER, DNP, FNP-C

*Asthma and Allergic Diseases*

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## Allergy and Skin Testing

We diagnose an allergy by first learning from you what you experience in the way of seasonal or continuous symptoms of sneezing, itchy watery nose, nasal congestion, itchy watery eyes, wheezing or coughing. We follow up as necessary with skin testing, which is an extremely useful tool we use to confirm and identify your particular allergic triggers and also to find other sensitivities, which may be difficult to detect. However, a positive skin test does not necessarily mean that you are allergic to a particular substance. Some patients will have a positive skin test to substances that they are not allergic to at all. It is always necessary to correlate allergy skin test results with your patterns of clinical symptoms.

A skin test, which causes localized swelling and redness at the testing site is considered a positive reaction. We use the skin prick testing method because it is the “gold standard” for measuring positive allergic responses. A prick test requires you to get small scratches on your inner forearm onto which is placed very small amounts of the suspected substances, also known as allergens. We also may use intradermal tests to further define suspected allergies when prick tests are negative. An intradermal test requires injection of a very small amount of allergen(s) in the upper arm, much like a TB test. Intradermal tests to specific substances are not done if the skin prick test is positive. Finally, we do not generally use blood testing, known as RAST testing, because it is less specific and less sensitive than skin testing and far more expensive. Blood testing is generally reserved for people who have severe skin rashes thereby making skin testing impossible.

## What to Expect

Allergy testing generally requires three visits to complete, each lasting approximately thirty minutes. Skin prick testing is done at the first two appointments while intradermal testing, if required, is completed at the last visit. When the testing process has been completed, our allergy

nurse will review detailed environmental control methods with you that are necessary to avoid your suspected allergens. After testing is done an appointment with your physician or nurse practitioner will be scheduled to discuss the test results, answer your questions, and formulate an individualized treatment plan. If indicated, allergy testing to foods may be ordered and requires a separate appointment. Intradermal tests are not done with food products. Depending on the availability of appointments and local skin reactions, ten to fourteen days are usually required to complete the testing process. Skin prick testing is a safe, highly reliable, and proven method to help define suspected allergies. Please note the following important guidelines necessary to make your (or your child’s) allergy tests accurate and safe:

## Allergy Testing Guidelines

**1. Make sure that we have a complete list of ALL medications that you (or your child) are currently taking.**

This includes any over-the-counter medications.

**2. No antihistamines are to be taken for at least five days prior to allergy testing.**

This includes any prescription antihistamine (Claritin, Clarinex, Allegra or Zyrtec), as well as non-prescription cold, cough, or allergy medications. This also includes any allergy or antihistamine eye drops, nasal sprays such as Afrin, Drixoral, Neosynephrine, and any decongestant (pseudoephedrine) as well. This may mean that you will be without these medications for three weeks or longer during the testing process.

**3. Do not stop taking your asthma medications.**

Continue using your asthma inhalers, Singulair, or inhaled nasal steroid spray such as Rhinocort, Nasonex, Nasacort, Flonase, Omnaris, Veramyst or any other asthma or allergy medications unless you are instructed to stop.

**4. Allergy testing cannot be done if you take a beta-blocker.**

All beta-blockers including metoprolol, propranolol, nadolol, atenolol, nebivolol, bisoprolol, or others must be discontinued under close medical supervision of your primary care physician or cardiologist prior to testing. This list also includes certain eye