



---

## **BOULDER MEDICAL CENTER, P.C.**

---

### **What is Allergy Testing?**

Allergy testing can be done in several ways depending on the type of allergy suspected. The following is a summary of the types of allergy tests that may be performed.

### **Prick Skin Testing**

Prick skin testing is a quick, reliable and sensitive way to check for allergies. During the procedure, a small amount of the allergen is placed on the skin and the skin is gently pricked with the testing device. If the test is positive then an itchy bump develops that looks like a mosquito bite. The test takes approximately 20 minutes.

Prick tests are most commonly done on the back, however in some situations they are done on the arm. Patients who have significant amounts of back hair should shave their backs 2-3 days prior to testing.

### **Intradermal Skin Testing**

Intradermal skin testing involves an injection of a small amount of the allergen under the skin. If the test is positive an itchy bump occurs similar to the prick test. Intradermal tests are done certain situations such as testing for bee/wasp allergy, drug allergy and vaccine allergy. Intradermal tests are sometimes done for inhalant allergens (pollens, pets, dust mites) if the prick tests are negative and there is a strong suspicion of an allergy.

### **Is Skin Testing Safe?**

Skin testing is a safe way to check for allergies. However, in rare incidences skin testing may trigger significant allergic symptoms in highly allergic individuals. This occurs more frequently with intradermal skin tests.

### **Patch Testing**

Patch testing is used to determine if a rash is due to skin contact with allergens, such as those present in make-up or soap. Patch testing involves placement of tape with small amounts of allergens present on the back. The skin is covered by a water tight bandage for several days.

### **Blood Tests**

RAST testing may be done to detect IgE (the allergic antibody) to a specific allergen. RAST may not be as sensitive as skin testing for the detection of allergies. It may be used to supplement information from skin testing or if it is not possible to perform skin testing.