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WHAT IS SKIN TESTING?

A skin test is a common way to test for food allergies (such as peanut) and environmental allergies (such as pollens). To do a skin prick test an allergist or an allergy nurse will put a tiny bit of allergen on the skin then make a small scratch or prick on the skin. Skin testing does not involve needles. If your child has allergies, a little swelling that looks like a mosquito bite will form where the test was placed. Results are read within 15-20 minutes.

WHAT ALLERGENS CAN SKIN TESTS LOOK FOR?

Skin testing can check for different kinds of allergies such as :

Environmental allergies including pollens, dust and pets

Food allergies including peanut, tree nuts, egg and cow's milk

SHOULD TESTING BE DONE PRIOR TO A CHILD EATING A PARTICULAR FOOD?

In general testing is not recommended before a child has eaten a food. If you have concerns about feeding your child please discuss this with your allergist.

IS THERE ANY PREPARATION NEEDED FOR SKIN TESTING?

Some medicines such as antihistamines, cold medicines and Gravol can affect test results. Your child should stop all antihistamines (such as Reactine or Claritin), cold medicines and Gravol for at least 5 days before skin testing. Pain medicines, nasal sprays, puffers and montelukast (Singulair) are all safe to continue to use.

WHAT ARE POSSIBLE SKIN TEST REACTIONS?

In general skin testing is very well tolerated. It is slightly uncomfortable while it is being performed but after the testing is finished there are no ongoing symptoms other than mild itching. In general all symptoms go away within an hour or so.