

## Self-Care After Allergy Testing

Allergy testing involves introducing very small amounts of potential allergens just under the top layer of the skin. Most patients experience little to no side effects, but it's important to be aware of possible reactions and how to manage them.

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Common Reactions: These are usually *mild and resolve on their own*:

- **Redness or Swelling at Test Site**
    - **What it looks like:** *Small, raised, red bumps or mild swelling* where the test was performed. Similar to a mosquito bite.
    - **What to do:** Apply a cool compress or topical hydrocortisone or benadryl cream to the area. Over-the-counter oral antihistamines (such as cetirizine) can help relieve itching or discomfort.
  - **Mild Itching**
    - **What it looks like:** *Itching at or near the test site.*
    - **What to do:** Avoid scratching. Use a cool compress or oral antihistamines if needed.
  - **Mild Bruising**
    - **What it looks like:** *Slight discoloration at the test site.*
    - **What to do:** This will resolve on its own. No treatment is necessary.
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Less Common, but More Noticeable Reactions

- **Large Local Reaction**
    - **What it looks like:** *Significant swelling or redness* (larger than a quarter) at the test site. Sometimes swelling can be rather large- up to the size of your hand.
    - **What to do:** Apply a cool compress/ice. Oral antihistamines (such as cetirizine) should be taken. Your provider may have provided a small amount of oral steroids (prednisone) to take for more significant local reactions. Please take as directed.
    - **NOTE:** While uncomfortable- local reactions are *not* dangerous and do not require ER intervention
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Serious Reactions (Rare): ***Seek immediate medical attention if you experience any of the following:***

- **Generalized Hives or Rash:** Itchy, red welts appearing on areas of the body away from the test site.
- **Swelling of the Face, Lips, Tongue, or Throat:** Noticeable swelling, difficulty swallowing, or speaking.
- **Difficulty Breathing, Wheezing, or Chest Tightness:** Shortness of breath, noisy breathing, or a feeling of tightness in the chest.
- **Dizziness or Fainting:** Lightheadedness, feeling faint, or loss of consciousness.

**If you experience any of these serious symptoms, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room immediately.**

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#### How to Treat Mild Reactions at Home

- Avoid exercise or heat after testing for 24 hrs as this may exacerbate reactions.
- Cool Compress: Apply to the affected area for 10–15 minutes as needed.
- Apply topical steroids such as hydrocortisone or topical benadryl gel.
- Oral Antihistamines: Take as directed for itching or swelling.
- Avoid Scratching: This helps prevent irritation or infection.
- If recommended at your visit, begin prednisone as directed.

#### When to Contact Our Office

- If you have a large local reaction that is not improving after 24–48 hours.
- If you develop a fever, pus, or signs of infection at the test site.
- If you have any concerns about your symptoms.

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#### Contact Information:

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