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Patient instructions before Patch Testing:

1. Patch Testing cannot be done on patients who are pregnant or breastfeeding.
2. Do not use any steroids for 2 weeks prior to patch testing. This includes topical, oral, intramuscular, and ocular. If you are using any one of these medications, contact the doctor that prescribed them to see if it is safe for you to discontinue.
3. Do not expose your back to the sun or sunbed for at least 2 weeks before patch testing and continue to avoid exposure during the week of the testing.
4. Wear old, dark clothing as pen marks can stain clothes.
5. Preparation for testing:
 - A. Shower the morning of the test, as you cannot get your back wet from the time the patches are applied to the time of the second reading.
 - B. Do not put any creams or oils on your back the morning of the testing.
 - C. If there is hair on the back where the patches will be applied, shave (an electric razor is preferable) a day or two before testing (do not use chemical hair removal products).
6. Side effects are rare, but include:
 - A. *Skin reddening and itching at the application site (a positive test result)*-this usually disappears after a few days. A strongly positive PT may cause a blister.
 - B. *Persistent reaction*- some positive test reactions, for example, to gold, may persist for up to a month.
 - C. *Flare of eczema*- a positive PT may be accompanied by a flare of existing or previous eczema.
 - D. *Pigment change*- an increase or decrease in pigment may be seen at the site of the patch tests; this may last for months or rarely (1 in 1000) is permanent.
 - E. *Infection*-this is rare and would need antibiotic treatment.
 - F. *Scarring*- very rare (1 in 10,000).
 - G. *Allergy*- Rarely, in approximately 1 in 5000 patch tests, you may become allergic to one of the substances applied during patch testing. In practice, this does not seem to cause problems in the long term.

References:

1. Fonacier L. A Practical Guide to Patch Testing. J Allergy Clin Immunol Pract. 2015 Sept-Oct;