



### Board Certified Otolaryngologists

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## Allergies

### What are Allergies?

Some individuals have an abnormal response to things in our environment. These can include pollens from plants (for example, trees, grasses, and weeds), molds, animal dander, insects and insect bites, odors (for example perfume, fragments from flowers), foods, chemicals and pollution. These responses may result in itching eyes, scratchy throat, sneezing, runny nose, hives and skin rashes, coughing, and asthma.

### How are allergies treated?

First, there are many types of medications for treating allergies, including, pills, nasal sprays and inhalers. Second, some people may be skin tested to see what is causing their allergies. Once the offending substances are identified, it may be possible to desensitize with weekly allergy shots that build up your immunity to the substances causing your allergies. Last, changes in your environment can be made to lessen your exposure to the allergens. Usually, it takes a combination of the above treatments to help lessen your allergy response.

### How are allergy skin test performed?

Skin reacts to an allergic substance (allergen) by forming a raised bump (wheal) if a person is allergic to that substance (allergen). There are two ways to place the allergen on the skin, either by scratching or pricking the skin with the allergen or injecting the allergen under the skin. After scratching or injected the allergen and waiting 10 to 20 minutes, the skin will react if you are allergic to that substance. You will be tested both ways. Screen scratch tests of 16 allergens can be applied simultaneously. This allows us to test you in a rapid way. You will feel a tiny prick or maybe a stinging (like a mosquito bite). If the skin itches, a steroid cream can be applied or a histamine pill can be give to stop the itching. Further testing may be performed by injections under the skin.

### How to prepare to be allergy tested

You should eat your breakfast or lunch. Wear a short sleeved or sleeveless shirt. The skin of your forearms and or back will be used. Testing can take two hours. You may take most of your regular medicines including inhalers for asthma and nasal sprays. You can NOT take antihistamines 3 days before allergy testing. You can not be tested if you are taking a beta blocker (a type of anti-hypertension medicine) Call the office for a complete list of medicines that interfere with allergy skin testing.

**More information:** Check our web site: [www.lakeside-ent.com](http://www.lakeside-ent.com)