

## What Allergens will I Be Tested For?

Because the physician has diagnosed you with allergies, one or more allergens may be causing your allergic reaction. Your symptoms are probably caused by one of these common allergens:

- Products from dust mites (tiny bugs you cannot see) that live in your home.
- Proteins from furry pets, which are found in their skin secretions (dander), saliva and urine (it is actually not their hair).
- Molds in your home or in the air outside.
- Tree, grass, and weed pollen.
- Foods
- Drugs, such as penicillin.

## The Allergy Testing Process

- You will first be seen by one of our physicians at PFM and be recommended for allergy testing.
- You will be tested here at the office by one of our physicians using the IgE blood sample test.
- Many patients can be treated by medications and avoidance counseling. Effective new prescription drugs can reduce allergy symptoms. Also, once the source of the allergy is identified, one solution may be to simply remove it or control it.
- If necessary, you will then be referred to an allergen specialist in the area for treatment.

**Where can I find more information concerning allergy testing and treatment?**

[http://www.labcorp.com/services/hcp/allergy/what\\_is\\_allergy.html](http://www.labcorp.com/services/hcp/allergy/what_is_allergy.html)

[http://www.labcorp.com/services/hcp/allergy/labcorp\\_allergy\\_program.html](http://www.labcorp.com/services/hcp/allergy/labcorp_allergy_program.html)

<http://allergies.about.com/library/blallsc16.htm>

## Allergy Testing

### Identify the Source of Your Sneezing



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## What are Allergies?

An allergy is an unpleasant physical reaction that a person experiences when the body is exposed to a substance to which a person is hypersensitive. Such substances, which are harmless to many people, are called allergens. Allergy can affect a wide variety of organs in the body and manifest a range of symptoms.

- Nose: nasal itching, congestion, sneezing, post-nasal drip, watery discharge.
- Eyes: Itching, redness, swelling, tearing, and other conjunctivitis symptoms.
- Ears: Fluid in middle ear, recurrent infections
- Lungs: Asthmatic symptoms such as shortness of breath, wheezing, tightness in chest and coughing.
- Skin: Itchy welts or hives of varying sizes, dry, blistering rash, intense itching.
- Digestive track: Stomach cramps, vomiting, diarrhea.

## How are Allergies Diagnosed?

Allergy tests are designed to gather the most specific information possible so your doctor can determine what you are allergic to and provide the best treatment.

The diagnosis of allergy begins with the patient's clinical history and symptoms. Allergy testing may then be used to identify the specific causes of the allergic reaction.

To test for allergies, the physician will administer an IgE blood test. The test quantitatively measures immunoglobulin E that is specific to allergens being tested. A single blood sample can provide allergen specific IgE test results to a variety of allergens, allowing primary care physicians the opportunity for early diagnosis and treatment of the allergic patients. The doctor simply draws a small amount of blood during an office visit, has it tested in the lab and will usually have the results within one week.

## Who Should Be Tested?

Over the past decade, allergies have increased dramatically in western culture. Up to forty percent of the population suffers from allergies and it is generally noted that at least one out of every four children suffers from allergies. Adults of any age who have symptoms that suggest they have an allergic disease or symptoms previously listed should be tested for allergies.

## Why is it Important to Test for Allergies?

Accurate diagnosis of allergen sensitivity can allow health care providers to develop an optimal therapeutic approach.

Early diagnosis and treatment of the allergic patient has been shown to modify the course of the disease and prevent subsequent development of other conditions such as asthma. Chronic allergy inflammation and associated infections can cause nasal damage and lung remodeling that can ultimately lead to asthma.

Early treatment of allergy can change the course of disease progression; with clinical intervention appearing the most effective if treatments are initiated early, emphasizing the importance of early diagnostic testing.

With your allergy symptoms under control you should see a considerable improvement in your quality of life. Improved sleep, days without constant sneezing and blowing your nose, improved ability to exercise, etc.