

## Tips for Allergy Skin Testing

### Allergen Extracts:

- Routinely check the expiration date of *each* allergen extract. (Expiration dates vary between extracts based on the individual extract composition.)
- Discard any allergen extracts that are expired.
- Store skin test kits and individual bottles of allergen extracts at 4°C (although 2° - 8° C is considered acceptable).
- Keep a refrigerator log, recording temperatures daily.
- Scratch test applicators are a single use item. To avoid contamination, discard in red biohazard bag immediately after use.
- Keep trays well-covered by replacing with a new scratch test applicator to prevent contamination and keep allergen extracts from drying out.
- Keep trays refrigerated when not in use.
- Ensure that your Skin Testing Results Form corresponds with your test kit.

### Patient Testing:

- Antihistamines should be discontinued 48 to 72 hours prior to skin testing.
- Tricyclic antidepressants and long-term steroid use may also affect skin test results for up to 7 days.
- The back tends to be more reactive than the forearm.
- Patients will typically have a larger skin test reaction for a particular allergen when that allergen is prevalent in the environment (ex: high pollen counts)
- Positive and negative controls should be performed with every skin test. If there is a negative response to the positive control, it may indicate possible antihistamine use or lack of sensitivity of the skin. If there is a positive response to the negative control, the skin may be reacting to the trauma to the skin caused by the test, rather than the testing agent.