

Visit 1  
GP Pre-Assessment

Visit 2  
Spirometry,  
Skin Prick Testing  
Report generation

Visit 3  
Telehealth with Allergist  
Specialist

Subsequent visits:  
Desensitisation Immunotherapy

### ALLERGY (SKIN PRICK) TESTING

Allergens (substances causing allergy such as pollen or dust mite) can worsen conditions like asthma and allergic rhinitis. Skin Prick Testing can help your doctor confirm which allergens might be contributing to your conditions, so that the most appropriate advice can be given to you.

At Springs Medical (SM), your Allergist GP, Dr Albert Ip, coordinates Skin Prick Testing for 5 grass pollens and 2 House dust mites. If you react to these allergens, SM can offer you a telehealth consult with an Allergist Specialist, currently Professor Frank Thien, Respiratory and Allergy Specialist in Melbourne.

Immunotherapy to desensitise against these allergens may be recommended as this may improve your asthma and allergic rhinitis.

### PATIENTS ARE ADVISED AGAINST HAVING SKIN PRICK TESTING AT SPRINGS MEDICAL IF THEY ARE:

- less than 16 years old (or otherwise advised)
- unable to stop antihistamines/other immunomodulation drugs
- experiencing uncontrolled asthma
- taking beta blocker medication
- pregnant

You are required to attend Springs Medical, Daylesford over 3 days:

**VISIT 1:** You will be booked in with Dr Ip where he will perform a thorough pre-assessment consultation for suitability of testing at SM. You may be referred onto a specialist for testing if your case is complex or not appropriate for testing at SM. This appointment will take 20-40 minutes generally.

It's very important that you contact reception if you unable to keep your appointment. Please give us at least 2 hours notice otherwise a charge may apply.

This is a non-rebate charge of \$50.

**VISIT 2:** If suitable, you will be booked for a 2<sup>nd</sup> visit. A trained nurse will perform spirometry or lung function testing. Skin Prick Testing will follow if ordered by Dr Ip. Due to COVID-19, spirometry will be suspended until covid is over.

Skin Prick Testing is most commonly performed on the forearm or the back. The skin is cleaned and then marked with numbers corresponding to the allergens. Using a single use only sterile lancet or multiple lancet device, a small prick is made into the skin to allow a small amount of each allergen to enter the skin. If you are allergic to the test allergen, a small itchy lump (wheal) surrounded by a red flare will appear within 15-20 minutes.

Skin Prick Testing is slightly uncomfortable with itching being the main symptom, but is usually well tolerated. Local itch and swelling normally subsides within 1-2 hours. More prolonged or severe swelling may be treated with a non-sedating antihistamine, a painkiller tablet and/or a cool compress. Occasionally people will feel dizzy or light-headed and need to lie down. Severe allergic reactions from allergy testing are very rare.

Ventolin may be administered if this should occur during this process.

The doctor will be overseeing the procedure and see you again at the end of the testing and observation period. The doctor will generate a report for you to take to an appointment with an Allergy Specialist. You can choose to come for a third visit utilizing our telehealth service with Prof. Thien, or choose to be referred to another Allergist Specialist of your choice. This appointment will take about 40 minutes generally.

● 10 Hospital Street  
Daylesford 3460  
t: 03 5348 2227  
f: 03 5348 1447

● 22 Victoria Street  
Trentham 3458  
t: 03 5424 1602  
f: 03 5424 1851

● 89 Piper Street  
Kyneton 3444  
t: 03 5422 1298  
f: 03 5422 1307

**VISIT 3:** You may choose to re-attend SM for a telehealth appointment with Dr Ip and Professor Thien to discuss your results. During this consult, it will be determined whether a desensitisation program is appropriate for you. A recommended treatment plan and costs involved will be provided to you. Options for treatment may include subcutaneous desensitization injections or sublingual (under the tongue) desensitisation orally. This appointment will take 20 minutes generally

**SUBSEQUENT VISITS:** Should you choose to have desensitization at SM, consultations with Dr Ip can commence and maintain your immunotherapy treatment.

### What do I need to do before the testing?

Pre-assessment is mandatory to check if you are suitable to have Allergy Skin Prick Testing at SM.

- Please notify the GP if you have a skin condition or if it has flared up over the potential testing site
- Avoid creams and moisturisers on your testing site on the day of the test to reduce the likelihood that allergen extracts will run into each other.
- Please notify the GP if you have an active lung condition.
- Please notify the GP if your asthma or allergy condition is active and severe
- **Certain medications that will interfere with the testing results should not be taken for 4 days before testing, please notify the GP if you are taking such medications. This includes but is not limited to:**
  - Puffers (as advised by your Dr IP or GP)
  - Antihistamine tablets e.g. Telfast or Zyrtec
  - Syrups or medications with antihistamine-like actions (such as some cold remedies and antidepressants)

### **COSTS:**

#### **1. Allergy Testing Fees**

**Visit 1:** Will incur a gap fee of \$50 (all patients)

**Visit 2:** Will incur a gap fee of \$125 (all patients)

**Visit 3:** Telehealth consultations with the Allergy GP and Allergy Specialist will be bulk-billed (no gap fee) for all patients.

#### **2. Immunotherapy (Desensitising) medication fees**

If patients proceed with desensitisation immunotherapy, a prescription for medication will be provided. Pharmacy costs for supply may be approximately \$100-150 per month of therapy. For pollen allergy this may be \$600-\$900 for 6 months per season. For dust mite this may be \$1200-\$1800 for 12 months supply depending on prescription requirements and pharmacy charges. These medications are not covered by the Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme nor the Medicare Safety Rebate. A partial rebate may be available from Private Health Insurance Extras.

#### **3. Desensitising Fees**

No out of pocket cost.

#### **4. Non-attendance or late cancellation fees**

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