

Menlo Medical Clinic Allergy
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Skin Testing Information

Allergy patients scheduled for skin testing must not use antihistamine compounds prior to the skin testing appointment. The compounds include not only the “classic” antihistamines, but also certain compounds with “antihistamine-like activity” such as the tricyclic antidepressants. These will be mentioned in the ensuing paragraphs.

Antihistamines are frequently a component of cold remedies and allergy pills. Therefore, it is important to read the package label and check with your pharmacist. Typical examples include: chlorpheniramine (Tylenol Allergy, Advil Allergy, and Dristan etc.), brompheniramine (Bromfed), diphenhydramine (Benadryl), triprolidine (Actifed), and clemastine (Tavist). These medicines should be withheld (not used) for at least **3 days (72 hours)** prior to your skin testing appointment. Preparations containing loratadine (Claritin, Claritin-D, Dimetapp non-drowsy, and many others) must be avoided for at least **7 days** prior to testing. Please check labels.

Certain antihistamines are long-lasting and need to be withheld as well. Fexofenadine (Allegra, Allegra-D), and cetirizine (Zyrtec, Zyrtec-D) should be avoided **4 days** prior to testing. Desloratadine (Clarinet) and loratadine (Claritin) should be avoided **7 days**. Hydroxyzine (Atarax) needs to be avoided for **2 weeks** and azelastine (Astelin) nasal spray, **48 hours**. Avoid Antihistamine eye drops such as Optivar, Patanol, Elestat, and Zatidor **24 hours**.

Antihistamines used to suppress stomach acidity such as ranitidine (Zantac), cimetidine (Tagamet), and famotidine (Axiid, Pepcid) should be withheld **24 hours** before skin testing. Prilosec, Aciphex, Protonix, Prevacid, and Nexium do **not** need to be withheld.

You may continue to use decongestants (Sudafed), steroid nasal sprays (Flonase, Nasacort AQ, Nasalide, Nasonex, Rhinocort AQ), nasal cromolyn (NasalCrom), and any asthma medicines (theophylline, asthma inhalers, Singulair).

Tricyclic antidepressants (such as amitriptyline, Elavil, Adapin, Sinequan, Tofranil, Trazadone, etc.), muscle relaxants (Flexeril, etc.), and sleeping pills (Ambien, etc.) can have “antihistamine-like” properties-**Please do not stop these medications without first contacting our office**. Other antidepressants such as paroxetine (Paxil), sertraline (Zoloft), fluoxetine (Prozac), citalopram hydrobromide (Celexa), escitalopram (Lexapro), and venlafaxine (Effexor) will **not** interfere with skin testing. If you are pregnant, please contact our office.

Please note: this is not a complete list. If your condition requires the continuous administration of any of the above medications or if you have any questions about medication you are taking interfering with skin testing, please contact our office at (650) 498-6720 prior to your appointment.

