

Department of Dermatology

Service Line Updates

July – September, 2026

Patch Testing Program: Information for Referring Providers

Our dermatology department offers patch testing for patients with suspected allergic contact dermatitis. **We perform testing about every other week at our Needham location, 272 Chestnut Street, Needham, MA.**

It's most useful for patients with persistent, recurrent or unexplained dermatitis when an allergic contributor is suspected. Patch testing does not diagnose irritant contact dermatitis or eczema unrelated to an allergen, and it does not evaluate food allergies, seasonal or environmental allergies, or urticaria.

Each patient first consults with the patch testing provider to confirm the test is appropriate. That visit includes a detailed medical, social, occupational and hobby history and a back exam to plan patch placement.

Testing requires three 30-minute morning visits in the same week, and patients must be able to attend all three:

- Monday: Allergen patches are applied to the back and secured with tape.
- Wednesday: Patches are removed; test sites are marked with a skin-safe marker, and a preliminary reading is done.
- Friday (30-60 min appt): A final reading is done. The provider reviews clinically relevant allergens with the patient and gives avoidance counseling, written materials and access to an online resource.

Please continue sending patch testing referrals through Epic In Basket for scheduling.

For questions about the program, please contact Sara Tong, RN, DNP, MSN Nursing Ed., FNP-BC, Director of Clinical Operations, Dermatology, at satong@bidmc.harvard.edu. More information is [available on our Portal site](#).