

# Breastfeeding and Medication



## Skin allergy tests in breastfeeding mothers

Mothers have been reporting that they have been advised to interrupt breastfeeding or even stop altogether in order to have skin and patch allergy testing. This doesn't seem based on evidence but possibly without national guidelines.

**The allergens do not pass into the blood stream let alone breastmilk so there is no reason to interrupt breastfeeding.**

**Skin prick testing** is one of the most common allergy tests. It involves putting a drop of liquid onto your forearm that contains a substance that you may be allergic to. The skin under the drop is then gently pricked. If you're allergic to the substance, an itchy, red bump will appear within 15 minutes.



Most people find skin prick testing not particularly painful, but it can be a little uncomfortable. It's also very safe.

[<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/allergies/diagnosis/>]. See video on how the test is conducted <https://healthandcarevideos.uk/allergies?videoid=1426>.

**Patch tests** are used to investigate a type of eczema known as contact dermatitis, which can be caused by your skin being exposed to an allergen.

A small amount of the suspected allergen is added to special metal discs, which are then taped to the skin for 48 hours and monitored for a reaction.



### **How to access allergy testing**

You may get tested at a specialist NHS allergy clinic following referral by your GP although the waiting list may not be fast. You can also get tested at a private clinic, and pay for your own allergy tests. It's not recommended that you use an at-home allergy testing kit if you suspect you have an allergy.

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July 2021 The information on this sheet is based upon my professional experience as a pharmacist with a specialised interest in the safety of drugs in breastmilk, supported by evidence from expert sources. However, I cannot take responsibility for the prescription of medication which remains with the healthcare professionals involved. I am happy to discuss the evidence by email [wendy@breastfeeding-and-medication.co.uk](mailto:wendy@breastfeeding-and-medication.co.uk)

## Medication

Should you react severely to an allergen test and require administration of an antihistamine, an adrenaline injection (e.g. EpiPen) or a steroid that does not stop you breastfeeding as normal

Adrenaline/epinephrine injection e/g/ EpiPen™. Ingredient present in milk but unlikely to be harmful as poor oral bioavailability . Half life 2 minutes so all gone from the body in 10 minutes.

Antihistamine - <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/antihistamines/>

Prednisolone - <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/prednisolone/>

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