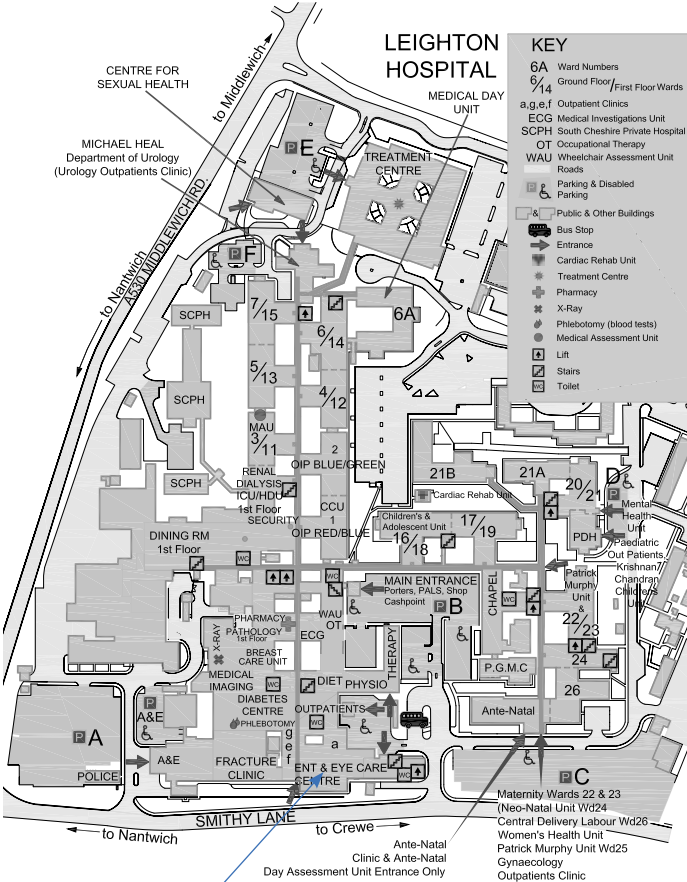


If you have any questions please
make a note of them to ask at your
next appointment



ENT and Eye Care
Centre

Head and Neck Unit

Skin Prick Testing
Information

Leighton Hospital
Middlewich Road
Crewe
Cheshire CW1 4QJ

www.mcht.nhs.uk

Direct Dial: 01270 612206

What is Allergy?

The term allergy is used to describe a response, within the body to a substance, which is not necessarily harmful in itself, but results in an immune response and a reaction that causes symptoms.

What is an allergic reaction?

People react adversely to many things, such as drugs, smoke, strong chemical smells and foods. This is often due to the body's sensitivity to moderate or high levels of these substances. An allergic reaction occurs when the immune system reacts to a normally harmless substance (e.g. pollen, cat) by making a specific antibody to fight it. This allergy antibody is called Immunoglobulin E(IgE). Each time the person encounters the offending substance, or allergen, it will link up with IgE and attach to a special white blood cell, called a mast cell, causing it to burst and release histamine and other chemicals into the bloodstream. These substances cause the irritation and inflammation in allergic disease.

Skin Prick Testing

This test, which measures specific IgE attached to the mast cells by introducing a tiny amount of the allergen into the skin. This is probably the most commonly used allergy test and is appropriate for inhaled and ingested allergies.

The Test

The test is carried out on the inner forearm. Selected aeroallergens are used. The arm is coded with a numbered tape for the allergens to be tested. A drop of allergen solution is placed by each number.

The skin is then pricked through the drop using the tip of a lancet – this can feel a little uncomfortable but should not be painful.

Positive Reaction

The skin becomes itchy within a few minutes and then becomes red, forming a "weal" approximately 3-5mm in diameter after about 15-20 minutes. This clears normally within an hour.

Precautions

- This test is NOT suitable for anyone who has had anaphylactic shock to any allergen.
- Antihistamines taken by mouth should be stopped for 48 hours prior to the skin prick test.
- Do not apply any steroid creams to the arms on the day of testing.
- Steroid inhalers and nasal sprays should be used as normal as these do not affect the test.

Contact Information

ENT Outpatients Department

Mon – Fri 8.30am – 5.00pm

Tel: 01270 612206

Appointments

Tel: 01270 612200

Please cancel any appointment you cannot attend.