

Allergy Testing

*Identifying triggers for
personalised allergy care*



Allergies, or hypersensitivities, are overreactions of the immune system to substances that do not cause symptoms in most people. These substances are called allergens.

What are common allergens?

Allergies can be triggered by a wide range of substances, including:

- **Foods** – eggs, milk, soy, wheat, fish, sesame, peanuts, tree nuts, shellfish
- **Plants** – pollens, weeds, grasses
- **Insect venoms** – bee or wasp stings
- **Animal dander** – from cats and dogs
- **Environmental allergens** – dust mites, mould spores
- **Medications** – such as penicillin
- **Occupational substances** – such as latex

How do you develop an allergy?

When a person is exposed to an allergen for the first time, their immune system may become sensitised by producing a specific antibody called immunoglobulin E (IgE). On future exposure, these antibodies recognise the allergen and trigger the release of chemicals such as histamine, causing allergic symptoms. These symptoms usually appear where the allergen enters the body, such as the mouth, nose, lungs or skin.

What are the symptoms of allergy?

Allergic reactions can affect different parts of the body.

- **Skin** – rash, dermatitis, eczema, itching
- **Respiratory system** – coughing, sneezing, nasal congestion, throat tightness, asthma, red itchy eyes
- **Gastrointestinal system** – tingling or itching in the mouth, swelling of the tongue or throat, abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhoea

Anaphylaxis: Severe allergic reactions can be life-threatening and may cause anaphylaxis, which requires immediate treatment with adrenaline.

If you are experiencing allergy symptoms, speak to your GP. They can help identify possible triggers and guide you through testing and treatment options.



How are allergies diagnosed?

Diagnosis begins with a review of your symptoms, family history and personal history, including when symptoms started, whether they are seasonal and what triggers them. Environmental and lifestyle factors such as pollution, smoking, exercise, alcohol, medications and stress may also influence symptoms. Once your doctor has identified possible allergens, specific testing can be performed.

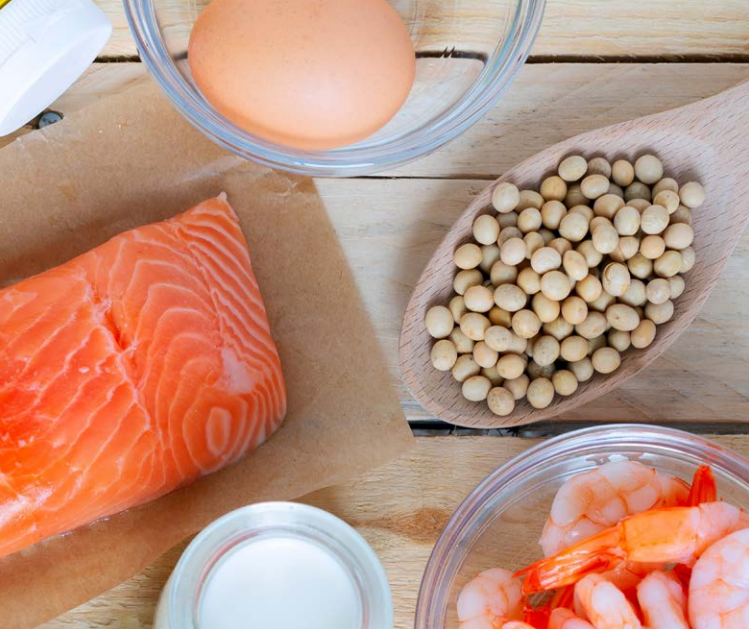
Your clinical history is the most important factor in guiding which allergen tests to order.

What tests are available for allergies?

Allergy testing may include skin prick testing or a simple blood test called serum-specific IgE testing. This blood test detects allergen-specific IgE in your blood and is used to confirm sensitivities once a clinical diagnosis of allergy has been made.

Testing is available for a wide range of food and environmental allergens. It helps diagnose allergies to foods, insect venom, some medications and latex, and supports the management of allergic conditions such as asthma, eczema and hay fever by identifying relevant triggers.

Clinical Labs offers a wide selection of serum-specific IgE tests, which can be selected based on your symptoms.



To view our current test offering, scan the QR code or visit: clinicallabs.com.au/patient/allergy.

What are the benefits of allergen-specific IgE testing?

- Can be ordered by a GP while you wait for a specialist appointment
- Suitable even if you have extensive skin disease
- Not affected by medications such as antihistamines or steroids

Where can I get allergen-specific IgE testing?

You can visit any of our 1,200+ Clinical Labs collection centres across Australia for your allergen-specific IgE blood test. We welcome and accept all pathology request forms.

To find your nearest collection centre, visit:
clinicallabs.com.au/location.



What does testing cost and what does Medicare cover?

Medicare covers up to four patient episodes (blood tests) of allergen-specific IgE testing within any 12-month period. Each blood test may include four single allergens, four allergen mixes or any combination of four allergens and mixes. If tests are not ordered together, each additional episode will require a new referral and specimen collection.

Tests beyond this limit will incur an out-of-pocket cost. Please visit [clinicallabs.com.au/patient/allergy](https://www.clinicallabs.com.au/patient/allergy) for current pricing.

What treatment options are available?

- **Avoidance:** The most effective way to prevent allergic reactions is to avoid known allergens.
- **Desensitisation (Immunotherapy):** May be recommended when avoidance is not possible and can help build tolerance over time.
- **Medications:** Antihistamines and nasal sprays can provide short-term relief from allergy symptoms.
- **Anaphylaxis management:** People at risk should carry adrenaline (EpiPen) at all times and seek immediate medical attention if used.



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