

# Guidelines for the Management of Contact Dermatitis

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on behalf of the British Association of Dermatologists Therapy Guidelines and Audit Subcommittee

## Main recommendations (with strength of recommendation and quality of evidence grading)

- Patients with persistent eczematous eruptions should be patch tested (*Strength of recommendation A, Quality of evidence II.ii*)
- A suggested annual workload for a patch test clinic serving an urban population of 70,000 is 100 patients patch tested (*B, II.iii*)
- Patients should be patch tested to at least an extended standard series of allergens (*A, II.ii*)
- An individual who has had training in the investigation of contact dermatitis prescribes appropriate patch tests and performs a day 2 and day 4 readings in patients undergoing diagnostic patch testing (*A, II.i*)

## Recommended Minimum Standards (all are potential audit points)

1. Aim for a minimum patch test rate for an urban population of 1 per 700 members of the population.
2. Supply patient information sheets.
3. Reference books and journals on occupational and contact dermatitis should be available.
4. A dedicated patch test area for storage (refrigerator) and preparation of allergens should be available.
5. A dermatologist or other individual who has been trained in the investigation of contact dermatitis prescribes appropriate patch tests and performs a day 2 and 4 reading in all patients undergoing patch testing.
6. Patch testing should be performed using an extended standard series such as the BCDG extended standard series.
7. Additional series of allergens are essential to investigate allergies to:
  - Cosmetics and other agents in contact with the face
  - Medicaments including corticosteroids and antimicrobials
8. Desirable additional series of allergens include:
  - Hairdressers
  - Dental
  - Plastics and glues
  - Oil and coolant
  - Textile
  - Plant
  - Shoe
  - Perineal
  - Photopatch test

## Key to the Evidence and Recommendation gradings is in the full reference:

Br J Dermatol 2001; 145: 877-885

This summary includes revisions to April 2002

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