

CONTACT DERMATITIS - OVERVIEW

Contact dermatitis is an inflammatory condition of the skin. It manifests as a rash or irritation of the skin and is caused by contact with a foreign substance. Unlike seasonal allergies, which are mediated by IgE, contact dermatitis is mediated by T-cells. This means that it requires specialized testing (patch testing) that differs from traditional skin prick testing.

Your initial exposure to a foreign substance does not always cause a rash. However, it does sensitize your skin so that you may react to the next exposure. Common substances that can cause allergic reactions include:

- Hair dyes
- Metals (ex. nickel), often found in jewelry
- Latex rubber
- Fragrances in soaps, shampoos, lotions, perfumes, and cosmetics