

# Fast Facts Specific IgE vs CAST



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| Specific IgE testing (old term: RAST)   | CAST (Cellular Allergen Stimulation Test)  |
|---|--|
| IgE antibody-mediated allergy   | Basophil-mediated allergy to inhalants, food, food additives, preservatives, medications and occupational allergies  |
| Immediate reactions   | Immediate or delayed reactions   |
| Lower cost  | Higher cost  |
| <b>Specimen requirements</b><br>Serum SST (yellow top) tube<br>Minimum volume 5ml | <b>Specimen requirements</b><br>Heparin (green top) tube<br>Minimum volume 4ml<br><br>Note: Perform at least 2 weeks after a reaction and systemic steroid-free period   |
| <b>Specimen handling</b><br>Daily testing   | <b>Specimen handling</b><br><b>Sample collection:</b> Sundays to Thursday <b>only</b><br>This ensures that the sample reaches the laboratory on a weekday and within 24 hours<br><br>Note: Testing is not performed on weekends or public holidays |

## CAST is especially of value in diagnosing a suspected allergy to medication:

- Penicillin CAST: includes co-amoxycillin, penicillin metabolites and penicillin ring structures
- NSAIDs CAST: includes aspirin, ibuprofen and diclofenac
- Paracetamol CAST
- Diverse CAST: allergy testing of medications that are not available as commercial allergens
  - Medication (in tablet, capsule or liquid form) should accompany the blood sample and be clearly indicated on the request form
  - Note: Inhalers (gas), oils and ointments are not suitable for testing

For more information contact the Immunology department:

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