

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
Specimen requirements Serum SST (yellow top) tube Minimum volume 5ml	Specimen requirements Heparin (green top) tube Minimum volume 4ml Note: Perform at least 2 weeks after a reaction and systemic steroid-free period
Specimen handling Daily testing	Specimen handling Sample collection: Sundays to Thursday only This ensures that the sample reaches the laboratory on a weekday and within 24 hours 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-amoxycloxacillin, 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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