

Many people are allergic to peanuts, dusts or cats. For others, beauty products and even the sun may trigger a bad reaction. Suspect an allergy? **Dr K S Lim** of The Dermatology Practice gives us four pointers for keeping an allergic reaction at bay

ALLERGY

ALERT

① Get tested

A patch test is performed when a contact allergy is suspected. A panel of common allergy-causing chemicals are pasted onto a person's back then kept on for 48 hours before removal. Any reaction to a particular compound is then read and interpreted. Patients can also bring in their own products that they suspect might be causing the problem.

② Read labels carefully

Avoid products that are perfumed as these usually contain ingredients that can cause allergic reactions. People with extremely sensitive skin may react to ingredients such as parabens or lanolin. Other ingredients that have a high irritancy potential include retinol, benzyl peroxide, glycolic acids, hair dye chemicals and traditional Chinese medicated oils.

③ Take the right meds

Avoiding the offending agent is still the best option, but in select cases, medication can be used for desensitisation purposes in an effort to eliminate the allergy.

④ Avoid prolonged sun exposure

Sunlight can cause skin allergies. Someone with solar allergies reacts to sunlight (or components of the UV rays in the sunlight) and breaks out in a rash. This is not uncommon and is seen quite frequently. These individuals should use a broad-spectrum sunblock.



Know the Signs

You're having an allergic reaction if your skin turns red and itchy, if you have swelling on the affected area or when blistering develops. Rashes may spread to other parts of the body.

For more information, call The Dermatology Practice at 6694 3290 or visit www.thedermatologypractice.com.