



Welcome to the Adult Allergic Rhinitis Clinic

This leaflet is designed to provide you with important information about the services we offer, the procedures involved, and what you can expect during your visit.

What is allergic rhinitis?

Allergic rhinitis is an inflammation of the nasal passages caused by an allergic reaction to airborne particles such as pollen, dust, animal dander (skin flakes), or mould. Common symptoms include:

- Sneezing
- Runny or stuffy nose
- Itchy nose, eyes, or throat
- Watery eyes
- Post-nasal drip

What is the Adult Allergic Rhinitis Clinic?

The Adult Allergic Rhinitis Clinic is a convenient, comprehensive service that allows you to be assessed for allergic triggers for your rhinitis and receive a management plan **all in one visit**. This reduces the need for multiple hospital appointments and allows for quicker diagnosis and treatment plan which will be sent to your GP.

During your visit, you will undergo:

- A focused medical history and discussion about your symptoms.
- Skin prick testing (SPT) to help identify what substances you are allergic to.
- A management plan, including treatment options and lifestyle advice.

What to expect during your visit

Step 1: History taking

Our healthcare team will discuss your symptoms, including when they started, what triggers them, and how they affect your daily life. You will be asked about:

- The mechanism and timing of your symptoms, e.g. do symptoms occur during pollen season?
- Past medical history (such as asthma, eczema, or other allergies).
- Medication history, current or past use of antihistamines, nasal sprays, or asthma medications.
- Social history, pets, occupation and exposure to environmental allergens.

Step 2: Skin prick test (SPT)

Consent for testing: You will be asked to sign a consent form in the clinic.

It is a simple procedure to help identify what allergens you may be sensitive to. During this test:

- Small amounts of allergens (such as pollen, dust mites, mould etc.) are applied to your skin using a tiny lancet (fine needle) to prick the skin under the applied allergen.
- A reaction (redness, swelling, or a raised bump) will indicate an allergy to a particular substance.
- The test will usually be done on the forearm and it takes around 15 minutes. Total time of appointment is around 45 minutes.

Step 3: Management plan

Once your test results are available, our team will discuss your options for managing your allergic rhinitis. This may include:

- Allergen avoidance strategies – advice on how to limit exposure to triggers.
- Medications recommendations to GP – antihistamines, nasal sprays, or other treatments that can help relieve your symptoms.
- You will be given clear instructions on how to follow your treatment plan, and we will provide any necessary prescriptions.

Important information about the skin prick testing (SPT)

Before the test:

- **Medication:** It is really important that you stop any antihistamines a week before the appointment as it could affect the test results. If you are unsure about your medication, please contact us in advance.
- **Pregnancy:** If you are pregnant, please inform us before the test, as precautions may need to be taken.

During the test:

- The test site (usually your forearm) will be cleaned and allergens will be placed on the skin.
- Tiny pricks will be made with a sterile lancet to introduce the allergens.
- You may feel slight discomfort or a stinging sensation, but it should not be painful.

After the test:

- You may experience mild swelling or redness at the test sites, but this usually disappears after 30 minutes.
- In rare cases, a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) may occur. If this happens, emergency medication and care will be administered immediately in the clinic.

What to expect after your visit

- **Results:** You will receive the results of your skin prick test on the same day. Based on these results, a treatment plan will be discussed with you.

- **Follow-up:** Patients do not require further visits.
- **Management plan:** We will provide you with a detailed treatment plan, which may include medications and allergy avoidance strategies. The management plan will be sent to your GP.

Risks and complications

While the SPT is a safe and effective way to diagnose and manage allergic rhinitis, there are some risks to be aware of:

- Mild redness, swelling or itching at the test site.
- **Anaphylaxis:** rarely, a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) can occur. Emergency equipment and trained staff onsite will provide urgent care in this event.

Contact information

If you have any questions or need to reschedule your appointment, please contact us at:

ENT Department (Allergic Rhinitis Clinic)

Tel: 0118 322 7139 or email: rbb-tr.CAT1@nhs.net

Clinic Location: ENT Outpatients, Level 3 Eye Block, Royal Berkshire Hospital

Additional notes

What to bring to your appointment:

- A list of any medications you are currently taking.
- Any relevant medical documents/history or previous allergy test results.
- Please wear a short sleeved shirt/jumper.
- A family member or friend can accompany you for support if needed.

Thank you for choosing the Adult Allergic Rhinitis Clinic at Royal Berkshire Hospital.

We are committed to providing you with the best care and ensuring your symptoms are managed effectively.

To find out more about our Trust visit www.royalberkshire.nhs.uk

Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

RBFT ENT Department, October 2025

Next review due: October 2027