

Your TRUE TEST results indicate that you have a contact allergy to thiomersal. This contact allergy may cause your skin to react when it is exposed to this substance, although it may take several days for the symptoms to appear. Typical symptoms include redness, swelling, itching and fluid-filled blisters.

Thiomersal was commonly used as an antiseptic (such as Merthiolate or Mercurochrome®) and preservative in many medicines and vaccines. Over the past few decades, thiomersal has been replaced with other preservatives. Now, thiomersal is rarely included in antiseptics or medications, including merthiolate.

A contact allergy to thiomersal should not affect your ability to be vaccinated because most modern vaccines do not contain thiomersal. Vaccines given to children under the age of 6 are made without thiomersal. A few adult vaccines are still manufactured with thiomersal as a preservative, but thiomersal-free alternatives can usually be found if needed.

WHERE IS THIOMERSAL FOUND?

At work, you may find thiomersal in:

- Fluorescent dyes in metal working industries and forensic laboratories
- Vaccine and pharmaceutical manufacturing

At home, you may find thiomersal in:

- Vaccines and antitoxins
- In some nose, eye and ear medications (prescription and over-the-counter)
- Antiseptic sprays

HOW CAN YOU AVOID THIOMERSAL?

- Only use products that do not list thiomersal or related chemicals on the label, ingredient list or Material Safety Data Sheet (MSDS). If no information is available, contact the product manufacturer.
- Tell your physician, pharmacist, dentist and veterinarian that you are allergic to thiomersal. Ask for vaccines and medicines that do not contain thiomersal.
- If you think that you contact thiomersal at work, ask your employer for MSDS or manufacturer information on the product(s). Talk to your employer about using a different product or about wearing protective gloves and clothing to reduce skin contact.

WHAT SHOULD YOU LOOK FOR AND AVOID?*

Avoid products with the following names in the list of ingredients, MSDS, or package insert.

- Thiomersal or mercuriothiolate
- Merthiolate
- Sodium ethylmercurithiosalicylate
- Sodium 2-(ethylmercurithio)benzoate
- Mercury, ethyl(2-mercaptobenzoato-s)-, sodium salt
- Mercury, ((o-carboxyphenyl)thio)ethyl-, sodium salt

WHAT ARE SOME SIMILAR PRODUCTS THAT DO NOT CONTAIN THIOMERSAL OR A RELATED SUBSTANCE?*

- Most vaccines recommended for children under 6 years of age: measles, mumps, rubella (German measles), polio, pertussis (whooping cough), diphtheria, tetanus, Haemophilus influenzae type b (Hib), hepatitis B, varicella (chickenpox) and pneumococcal disease
- Some influenza (flu) vaccines
- Most types of adult vaccines are available in a thiomersal-free formulation

*These lists are brief and provide just a few examples. Read product labels carefully and talk to your doctor if you have any questions. Product formulations may change from time to time without notice. Talk to your doctor for specific instructions. For additional information about products that might contain **thiomersal** or a related substance, go to the Household Products Database online (householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov) at the United States National Library of Medicine.