

Tan in a Can: Proceed With Patch Testing

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PRECÍS

Patients should avoid topical application of products to the back before patch testing. Patch testing was successful in our patient who previously applied self-tanner.

INFORMATION

To optimize patch test results, preparing the back for patch testing is imperative. Most clinics instruct patients to avoid UV light before patch testing, because light may decrease overall patch test response. We also encourage patients to avoid application of any topical lotions or leave-on products for 12 to 24 hours before patch test placement. Our patient presented for patch testing with patchy,



Figure 1. Brown desquamating patches diffusely on the back.



Figure 2. Close-up of brown desquamation on presentation.

hyperpigmented, and slightly desquamating patches on the back (Figs. 1, 2). She had participated in a wedding party 2 days before patch testing and had applied self-tanner 3 days before patch testing. A search of the literature did not reveal any published reports of self-tanner application and patch testing contraindications. Our patient proceeded with patch testing and was noted to have relevant positive reactions.

The most common active ingredient in self-tanners is dihydroxyacetone. Dihydroxyacetone causes “browning” via the Maillard reaction with basic amino acids of keratin available at the stratum corneum.^{1,2} Contact allergy to dihydroxyacetone has been described.^{3,4} There were no adverse effects noted in our patient during patch testing, and she was able to mount a response to allergens. We encourage others to proceed with patch testing in a similar situation.

PEARL

We present a case of successful patch testing after self-tanner application.

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