

### Before you test:

#### **Is the Alcat Test a food allergy test?**

The Alcat Test is NOT a food allergy test. It is designed to test for **sensitivities**. Although the terms have been used interchangeably, food allergy and food sensitivity are quite different from one another. True allergies involve an immediate response and the symptoms are very often significant. For example, immediate hives and anaphylaxis are significant, immediate symptoms that may occur from true food allergies. Sensitivities are most often responsible for chronic inflammatory symptoms. The patient should avoid all items to which he/she has a known allergy regardless of the reaction or non-reaction determined by the Alcat Test.

#### **Is the Alcat Test and IgG test?**

The Alcat Test is **not** an IgG immunoglobulin/antibody test. The Alcat Test is a leukocyte activation test that analyzes direct, pro-inflammatory cellular responses of the innate immune system. IgG immunoglobulin testing does not assess or measure a pathological process and may simply reflect exposure and tolerance (not intolerance).

#### **Is fasting required before taking the Alcat Test?**

No. Fasting is not required. However, we recommend NOT taking any medications or supplements at least 4 hours prior to the blood draw. Being well hydrated is recommended prior to the blood draw.

#### **Should previously reactive foods (or foods the person believes are problematic) be reintroduced/consumed before testing/retesting the Alcat test?**

Numerous pathways may provoke the cellular response detected by the Alcat Food and Chemical Sensitivity Test. Some may require exposure, others do not.

For suspected food offenders (with the exception of true allergies) that have been avoided previous to testing, priming the system by consuming those foods two to three times within the week prior to testing would be best. For patients who do not wish to consume the suspected “problem foods” prior to testing, it is important to be aware that the cellular response measured by the Alcat Test, may or may not occur for those suspected foods, depending on the pathway responsible for the response.

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### **Do I need to test through a healthcare practitioner, or may I test on my own?**

You may test through a healthcare practitioner, directly through [www.guthealth.com](http://www.guthealth.com), or one of our program advisors at PreviMedica. A blood draw provided by a medical professional is required. We can assist you with arranging a convenient option for you. You may also take part in our additional support programs.

### **How much does the Alcat test cost?**

Pricing depends on the test panel you would like to order. It may also vary depending on whether you test through your practitioner or if you opt to test directly through the lab. If you are testing through your practitioner, it would be best to contact him/her to establish the price as we do not have access to those price lists. If you wish to test directly through the lab, please call 855-773-8463 Ext. 805 or you can order the tests online by going here: [Guthealth.com](http://Guthealth.com).

### **Is there any special handling for the sample?**

Blood is collected in the blue top vials provided in the test kit and should be stored at room temperature until shipped. Each vial collected must be filled to capacity. The number of vials is clearly indicated on the lab requisition form. Specimens should not be frozen, spun, or refrigerated. The laboratory will determine if the cells' viability is within specifications for testing.

### **Are there limitations regarding the days the blood specimen can be drawn and sent to the lab?**

There are no limitations. All of our whole blood tests are carefully validated and can be tested up to 72 hours after blood draw. However, samples should be shipped immediately, the same day of the blood draw to prevent any unnecessary delays (weather or a longer delivery time due to unexpected circumstances). If this is not possible (Sunday or holiday) the sample should be shipped the next day. Our courier is included in the pricing.

### **Can I have the test done while I am pregnant?**

The benefit of knowing foods that are not provoking an adverse reaction would be the same for both a pregnant and a non-pregnant female.

Although the test can be conducted any time during the pregnancy it is best to consider the following: due to integrated fetal-placental-maternal response during pregnancy, the potential differing response after delivery, and the duration of time to avoid reactive foods, it is recommended to test during the first or second trimester or wait until 8-12 weeks after delivery if already into the third trimester.

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### Are these tests covered by health insurance?

No. Insurance plans do not reimburse for the Alcat Test, currently.

### What if the baby is breastfed or formula fed?

If the baby's mother is breastfeeding, she should refrain from consuming the baby's reactive foods, as the proteins in the foods appear in her milk and are then passed to the baby when nursing.

This should also influence panel selection, in other words, which foods are tested. If the baby is formula fed, it's best to choose the test panels with the formula ingredients in mind. If the baby is breastfed, the mother's typical food consumption should be considered.

### Regarding testing children, must a child be a certain age to take the Alcat Test?

The minimum age for testing is 6 months and minimum weight is 16 pounds for babies who are ill or symptomatic. If the baby is thriving and does not exhibit delays in growth and development, no colic, no sleep issues, etc., it would be best to wait to conduct the test after the baby is consuming solid foods.

The blood being drawn is dependent on the weight of the baby, which influences panel selection. The number of items to test would be limited for a smaller baby because of the limit to the amount of blood that can be drawn.

Pediatric Patients (Weight in lbs.)	Maximum blood drawn at one time (ml)
16-20	10
21-25	10
26-30	10
31-35	10
36-40	10
41-45	20
46-50	20
51-55	20
56-60	20
61-65	25
66-70	30
71-75	30
76-80	30
81-85	30
86-90	30
91-95	30
96-100	30

### What are the medication restrictions for the Alcat test?

It is not necessary to postpone testing if, despite medication use, inflammatory symptoms persist. However, to the extent medication can be reduced prior to testing, the patient should do so, under the supervision of a healthcare provider.

If the individual is taking a medication on a long-term basis without the possibility of discontinuing it, the results would be reflective of his/her current status while taking that medication. If a medication is taken short term and the individual has been advised by his/her practitioner to discontinue it, it would be best to wait 2 weeks after the medication is discontinued. It is generally necessary to have a white blood cell (WBC) count to be greater than 3500 per microliter in order to have enough cells to test. If a sufficient WBC quantity is a concern, it might be best to have an extra tube or two of blood drawn.

If possible, do not take any medications at least 4 hours before blood draw.

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### After you test:

#### **How long will it take to receive my test results?**

Alcat Test results are available online after 5 business days. For tests ordered through a practitioner, results will be provided to the patient, by the practitioner.

#### **Why does this test not correlate with other food sensitivity tests I've done in the past?**

##### **Examples: IgG, IgA.**

The Alcat Test measures the cellular response not immunoglobulin (Ig) levels in the blood.

#### **The test did not show reactivity to *Candida albicans* even though I know overgrowth is an issue. Why?**

A reaction to *Candida* within the Alcat Test is not a diagnosis of *Candida* overgrowth nor does a lack of reaction to it rule out *Candida* overgrowth. The Alcat Test is measuring the cellular response to *Candida albicans*, not the amount present in the mucous membranes of the body.

#### **Should reactive foods/ingredients identified by the Alcat Test also be avoided in personal care products and supplements?**

Yes. Any product containing reactive ingredients, that is ingested or in contact with, should be avoided as much as possible.

#### **I know I am allergic to \_\_\_\_, but the Alcat test says I am not. Why?**

An allergic response involves an immediate IgE response which is not measured by the Alcat Test. A type 1 hypersensitivity, Immunoglobulin E (IgE) mediated immune response, is immediate and usually produces symptoms minutes after ingesting the offender, and up to hours later. This is a true allergic reaction. Symptoms of true allergies are significant, can be life-threatening and may include wheezing, hives, itching, immediate vomiting, or anaphylaxis. If you believe you may have this type of reaction, it is crucial that you go to your physician or allergist for the diagnosis. If you've been diagnosed with food allergies, it is very important to continue to avoid these allergens to avoid a potentially life-threatening situation, regardless of reactivity identified by the Alcat Test. The Alcat Food and Chemical Sensitivity Test is a highly sensitive, objective test for assessing the cells of the innate immune system and their response to foods, or what are called food sensitivities.

Symptoms related to sensitivities could occur hours after ingesting the offenders, or even days later. Those with symptoms of food sensitivities, may experience them chronically. Symptoms may include digestive issues such as diarrhea, constipation, flatulence, feeling bloated, headaches, migraines, fatigue, skin issues, arthritis, focus and attention issues, irritability, and more. It is also possible to have food sensitivities without noticing symptoms. The inflammation created by the white blood cell response may be occurring, but symptoms may not be detected.

### I know I have symptoms after consuming \_\_\_\_, but the Alcat test does not reveal a reaction to it. Why?

There are many different adverse reactions to foods. The Alcat Food and Chemical Sensitivity Test does pick up **many, but not all** adverse reactions. No test identifies all adverse reactions to foods.

If particular foods seem to be producing symptoms, regardless of the Alcat Test results, our suggestion would be that you continue to avoid them. However, foods that have been avoided for a significant period of time may come up as nonreactive on the Alcat Test. So, the suggestion is to “prime the system” before having the test, if there are no true allergies to the food in question (or celiac disease if gluten is in question).

With **retesting**, the suggestion is to have all the foods reintroduced and rotated before getting the test again. It is understandable that one may be hesitant to consume previously reactive foods prior to the test. However, if in fact a sensitivity to these foods/components exists, and if the immune pathway responsible for the reaction happens to rely on exposure but there was no exposure prior to the test, the reactivity might not be revealed in the Alcat Test.

There are other possibilities for “non-reactions” when someone feels very certain that the Alcat Test should have shown certain foods to be reactive.

Even if the food(s) in question were consumed prior to the test, a reactivity to them still might not have occurred. Examples include:

- The reaction may not necessarily be an immune response. The symptoms could be related to an intolerance -the insufficient availability of an enzyme responsible for the breakdown of the food (not a sensitivity). Example – lactose intolerance, FODMAP intolerance. GI symptoms could also be related to an intolerance to fiber in particular foods which would not involve an immune response.
- The reaction could be an IgE reaction (true allergy). The Alcat Test does not test for true allergies, the IgE response, which is immediate.
- It is possible that the particular food that is suspect is not the culprit but something else normally consumed along with it.
- It may no longer be a sensitivity after the avoidance period (sensitivities are not necessarily a lifelong situation; the immune system is a dynamic system in the body). What was reactive years or even months ago might no longer be reactive.

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### Why are the foods to be avoided in the blue boxes on the bottom of the first page of the results, color coded?

The boxes at the bottom of the page with the blue border, are for the components that, if reactive, would eliminate more than one food from the eating pattern. They include *Candida albicans*, gluten and gliadin, and casein and whey.

The foods listed in these boxes are printed in different colors. These foods are also tested individually, and the text colors indicate the degree of reactivity to each of these foods. You may be wondering why you can have one reaction to a food component, but then a different type of reaction to foods listed below it. For example, you might react moderately to gluten, but wheat and rye show as green underneath (non-reactive). This means that even though there was no reaction to wheat/rye as a whole, when the isolated gluten protein was tested in a more concentrated form, a reaction occurred. In this instance, our suggestion would be to eliminate gluten, as well as the grains that contain it (regardless of their individual reactivity) for the recommended period of time. Therefore, even if the foods listed in the box indicate no reaction, those foods would be best avoided due to the reaction of the main tested component represented in the box (*Candida albicans*, gluten/gliadin, casein/whey.)

### How much support is available after testing?

With every test offered by Cell Science Systems, the patient and/or ordering practitioner may be eligible to receive a complimentary 30- minute phone or video consultation with a member of our support team to discuss test results. To request an appointment for a complimentary session, please complete this form:

<https://cellsciencesystems.com/resultsreview>

Appointments are also available for healthcare practitioners to discuss the technology and science pertaining to the test. To request an appointment, please complete this form:

[AsktheLab](#)

### Do you provide meal planning advice that would take my results into account ?

Yes, PreviMedica, our sister company, offers meal planning services and lifestyle guidance. Customized meal planning tools and/or menus can be ordered for test panels of 150 foods or more.

The meal planning tools include a Quick Start Guide, Staple Builder, Builder Recipes, Product Recommendations, menu ideas, and tips for adhering to a rotation plan, if desired. To learn more go here: [Meal Planning Tools](#).

Another option is a 4-day or 8-day menu that can be created based on your Alcat Test results.

If your practitioner participates in this service, you may order these tools through him/her. If your practitioner does not participate in this service, you may order these tools directly from PreviMedica. To learn more about this service, please go here: [Menu](#). You can also order both by going here: [Meal Planning Tools and Menu combined plan](#).