Your patch test result indicates that you have a contact allergy to thimerosal. 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.

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

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

How can you avoid contact with thimerosal?
Avoid products that list any of the following names in the ingredients:

- Thimerosal or mercuriothiolate
- Merthiolate
- Sodium ethylmercurithiosalicylate
- Sodium2-(ethylmercurithio)benzoate
- Mercury, ethyl(2-mercaptopbenzoato-s)-, sodium salt
- Mercury, ((o-carboxyphenyl)thio)ethyl-, sodium salt

What are some products that may contain thimerosal?
Fluorescent dyes in metal working industries and forensic laboratories

Medications:

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

For additional information about products that might contain thimerosal, go to the Household Product Database online (http:/householdproducts.nlm.nih.gov) at the United States National Library of Medicine. These lists are brief and provide just a few examples. They are not comprehensive. Product formulations also change frequently. Read product labels carefully and talk to your doctor if you have any questions. These are general guidelines. Talk to your doctor for more specific instructions.