

PATIENT IMMUNOTHERAPY INFORMATION

After a thorough assessment, your clinician has recommended immunotherapy to best treat your allergic conditions. You will need to return to this office on the date & time below to begin your treatment plan.

Date & Time: _____

Why immunotherapy?

Among the wide variety of treatment possibilities available today, allergy immunotherapy is the only treatment that targets the cause of allergies and alters the natural course of the disease, which for many parents may lead to:

- ★ An improved quality of life
- ★ An end to discomfort and feeling ill
- ★ Lower costs of symptomatic drugs
- ★ Freedom to enjoy outdoor activities during allergy season
- ★ Fewer problems having pets at home or visiting family or friends with pets.

Clinical studies have shown that for the majority of patients, their allergies improve and this effect is maintained years after completing treatment.²

What is immunotherapy?

Allergies are caused by your immune system overreacting towards harmless substances the same way it would react towards something harmful like bacteria or a virus. Allergy immunotherapy slowly “trains” your immune system so you can tolerate these substances upon exposure. Allergy immunotherapy is a clinically documented treatment that may reduce or completely remove your allergy symptoms and the need for traditional, symptom-relieving medication. This kind of treatment has been in use worldwide for many decades and clinical studies have shown that it is both safe and effective.²

What goes into my immunotherapy medication?

The most commonly treated allergens include house dust mites, pollens (from grasses, trees, and weeds), dander from pets and other animals, and molds. The products mixed for your allergy immunotherapy are called allergenic extracts. These are natural, purified preparations made from the actual allergen source and are approved for clinical treatment.

How does immunotherapy work?

Immunotherapy occurs in two distinct phases: build-up and maintenance. The build-up process begins with the administration of a weak concentration of an allergen extract. Your immunotherapy dose will become increasingly stronger until you reach the maximum dose. This phase can be as short as 90 days or several months, but can also vary based on your sensitivity to the allergens and your specific treatment plan. Once you have reached your maximum dose, you enter the “maintenance” phase of treatment.² Immunotherapy is recommended for 3 - 5 years. However, the length of treatment, is determined by your degree of symptom relief and your physician’s recommendation.

How is immunotherapy given?

Your provider will work with you to develop a treatment plan. This plan will determine the frequency of your visits. Depending on numerous factors, you might receive shots or sublingual drops.

- ★ For allergy shot patients, immunotherapy will begin with 1-2 visits per week until reaching the maintenance phase. After reaching maintenance, shot appointments will be less frequent occurring once every 2-4 weeks. Following

each injection, you will be asked to wait for 30 minutes in your doctor’s office to be observed for an allergic reaction.

- ★ For sublingual immunotherapy (drops), only the first dose is given in your doctor’s office with the remainder of treatment administered at home. Most sublingual medications are given daily and are to be taken at the same time of day.

When will I begin to feel better?

Many patients begin to see results as early as 2 -3 months or shortly after reaching maintenance. Your need for antihistamine drugs may decrease and your symptoms may become less severe. Some studies have even shown that allergy shots may prevent the onset of other allergies and the development of asthma. Also, the treatment has a long-standing effect after it is discontinued. The most recent findings show that the benefits of allergy immunotherapy are maintained years after completing treatment. For some people, symptom relief may persist indefinitely.

The key to success is BE PATIENT and CONTINUE TREATMENT. Your chances of seeing improvements in your allergy symptoms drastically increase the closer you follow your physician’s treatment plan.

What are the possible side effects?

Although immunotherapy has been shown to be highly effective in treating the underlying cause of allergies, patients being treated may have side effects. Mild, local reactions are fairly common for all forms of immunotherapy. Specifically:

- ★ Injections, you may experience minor discomfort from the injection, and some swelling at the injection site can be persistent, but the nursing staff will have topical treatments to lessen any irritation or pain following a shot.
- ★ Sublingual treatment, many patients report minor itching of the lips and tongue, which tends to occur at the higher doses, and in most cases resolves without concern.

Any reaction, no matter how minor, should be described to your physician so it can be documented appropriately. Some patients experience systemic reactions following immunotherapy. These types of reactions will involve symptoms that occur in a part of your body different from where the dose was given. This often resembles the type of allergy reaction that you experience when you encounter the actual allergy trigger. Common systemic responses include sneezing, redness and itching, or hives. These types of reactions are rare, but can lead to more severe symptoms that need to be treated immediately. It is important to always inform your treatment staff if they ever occur. Some systemic reactions can progress rapidly to anaphylaxis and urgent care may be required. Your treatment team may request that you obtain, and be trained on the use of an auto-injectable epinephrine device.

Sources:

1. Bousquet J, Lockey RF and Malling HJ. WHO Position Paper. Allergen immunotherapy: therapeutic vaccines for allergic diseases. Allergy 1998; 53 (Suppl 44): 1-42.
2. Cox, L, et al. Allergen immunotherapy: a practice parameter third update. J Allergy Clin Immunol. 2011 Mar;127(3):840. 3. Canonica, W, et al. Sublingual Immunotherapy WAO Position Paper 2013 Update. World Allergy Organization Journal 2014, 7:6.

Sublingual Immunotherapy Patient Instructions

What is Sublingual Immunotherapy?

Allergy sublingual immunotherapy drops are designed to treat many common allergies. Some allergies include grass, tree, and weed pollens, molds, dust mites, cat and dog dander, and many other environmental allergens.

By comparison to other allergy medications, sublingual (meaning under the tongue) drop therapy is using the body to become tolerant to the allergen, thereby reducing those unwanted allergy symptoms. People who may benefit from allergy drops include:

- ★ Children and adults
- ★ Asthma and allergic rhinitis patients
- ★ People with multiple allergies including dust, pollen, mold, and animals
- ★ People with an intolerance to the side effects of other allergy medications

Specifically, the goal of allergy sublingual drops is to treat common allergy related conditions, such as sneezing, watery or itchy eyes, stuffy and itchy nose, and itching of the skin. Once treated, you may no longer depend on using other allergy medications, thereby enhancing your quality of life.

Some patients experience benefit in as little as 60 days, but with continuous therapy, you may experience additional benefits and tolerance to allergies with longer use of your drops. Therapy is recommended for three to five years.

Instructions for Use

Your particular extract is provided with a metered bottle that provides a calculated dose with each pump. Follow the steps below to accurately use your medicine.

1. Prime the bottle by pressing the pump until you see a very small amount of solution exit the tip of the pump.
2. Once primed, place the pump bottle near and under the tongue, and press the metered pump. If you are administering your first dose, it might help to use a mirror to assist with coordination.
3. After pumping the drop(s) under the tongue, hold for 2 minutes prior to swallowing. This is important as the goal is to let the solution absorb into the little blood vessels located under the tongue. If you swallow immediately after pumping, the acids in your stomach can breakdown the solution, making it ineffective.
4. After finishing with the appropriate number of pumps, simply place the bottle in a convenient place to help remind you to use it the next day.
5. Try to take your medication at the same time each day, or at the direction of your provider.

Take the medication according to instructions received from your physician and according to directions on your medication package. You will gradually increase your dose during the first 12 Weeks of allergy sublingual drops. Follow the schedule in the table below.

First Prescription (Build-up)

Immunotherapy Blue Vial (1:25)	Immunotherapy Yellow Vial (1:5)	Immunotherapy Red Vial (1:1)	Dose
Week 1	Week 5	Week 9	One drop under the tongue daily
Week 2	Week 6	Week 10	Two drops under the tongue daily
Week 3	Week 7	Week 11	Three drops under the tongue daily
Week 4	Week 8	Week 12	Four drops under the tongue daily

At Week 13 you will begin your maintenance dose. This means you will take the same dose for the remainder of the treatment protocol.

Maintenance Dosing Regimen: Week 13 and Beyond	
Daily	Four drops under the tongue daily