

Why consider immunotherapy?

Among the wide variety of treatment possibilities available today, allergy immunotherapy (allergy shots), according to the World Health Organization, is the only treatment that targets the cause of allergy and alters the natural course of the disease¹, which, for many patients may lead to:

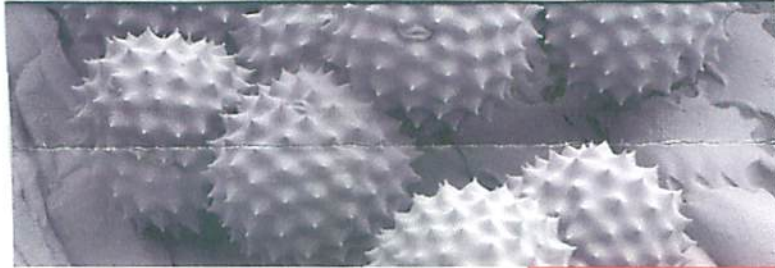
- An improved quality of life
- Less symptomatic drugs in the case of respiratory allergies
- Ability to enjoy outdoor activities during allergy season
- Fewer problems having pets at home or visiting family or friends with pets

Immunotherapy has a long-standing effect after it is discontinued. Research suggest that results are maintained for 5 to 10 years after the course of allergy shots has been completed.⁴

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 potentially remove your allergy symptoms and the need for traditional, symptom-relieving medication. This kind of treatment has been in use worldwide for over 100 years with many clinical studies showing it is both safe and effective.²



What goes into my allergy shot?

Your treatment team will review your skin or blood test results and determine which allergy triggers should be selected for immunotherapy. 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 shots are called *allergenic extracts*. These are natural, purified preparations made from the actual allergen source and are approved for clinical treatment.

Many allergenic extracts can be mixed together while others are best treated separately. Therefore, depending on the number and type of allergens included in your treatment, you may receive two or more injections for each visit.

How does immunotherapy work?

Immunotherapy occurs in two distinct phases: build-up and maintenance. The build-up process begins with the injection of a weak concentration of an allergen extract. Injections of increasingly stronger concentrations are given until you reach the maximum dose. This process typically takes several months but can vary based on your sensitivity to the injections and your specific treatment plan.

Once you have reached your maximum dose, you enter the "maintenance" phase of treatment. Immunotherapy is recommended for 3 - 5 years.² However, the length of treatment, is determined by your degree of symptom severity and your physician's recommendation.

Top 4 Tips for Success

Be Compliant – sticking to your treatment plan increases your chances of success

Be Committed – the long term nature of the treatment can be overwhelming but the results can be life-changing

Be Patient – symptom relief can vary between patients

Be Involved – report any signs of a reaction to your physician so they can track your progress and make adjustments



What will my appointment be like?

You will work with your allergy specialist to develop a treatment plan. This plan will determine the frequency of your visits. Typically, patients beginning immunotherapy have 1-2 visits per week until reaching the maintenance phase. When you have reached maintenance, appointments will be less frequent occurring once every 4-6 weeks. Until your immune system has had time to adjust, you may still need the symptomatic relief medication you are already using.

During your visit, you will be given 1-3 shots depending on the number of allergens treated. Some people report minor discomfort at the site of injection, but the nursing staff will have topical treatments to lessen any irritation or pain following a shot.

Once you have received your injections, you will be asked to wait for 30 minutes in your doctor's office to be observed for an allergic reaction. Any reactions, no matter how minor, should be described to your physician so it can be documented appropriately.

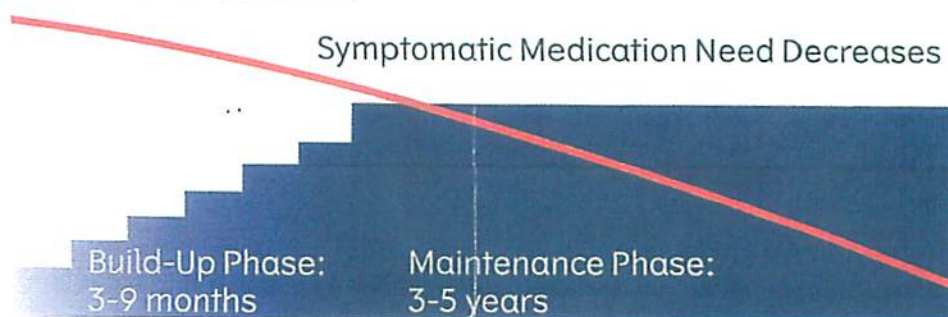
When will I begin to feel better?

Many patients begin to see results as early as 3 - 6 months or shortly after reaching maintenance. Your need for antihistamine drugs may decrease and your symptoms may become less severe. Research has suggested that allergy shots may prevent the onset of other allergies and the development of asthma.³ Also, the treatment has a long-standing effect after it is discontinued. The most recent findings show that the benefits of allergy shots are maintained years after completing treatment. For some people, symptom relief may persist indefinitely.²

The key to success is BE PATIENT. 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. Some individuals may experience itching and redness at the site of injection, while others may experience local swelling and soreness 8-12 hours after injection. Although these local reactions may produce discomfort, they are not serious. Serious systemic reactions can occur, but they are rare.



Immunotherapy Dose Schedule - Doses Increase Slowly Until Reaching Maximum Strength