

SONORAN ALLERGY & ASTHMA CENTER, PC
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ALLERGY IMMUNOTHERAPY

Dr. Ispas-Ponas has suggested that you might receive Allergy Immunotherapy, because this is the only type of allergy treatment that can potentially alter your response to certain airborne allergens such as house dust mites, pollens, or molds. Your treatment will start with the most dilute serum vial and over the next few months will progress through the concentrated vials, until you reach the most concentrated vial, or you have a significant improvement in your symptoms, or you are unable to tolerate further increases in your serum dose. The highest dose you can obtain benefit with is called your maintenance dose. You will receive allergy shot/s twice a week if possible or weekly for the first year and if the doctor agrees, once every two weeks in the second year.

ADVANTAGES

- Allergy shots are very effective for hay fever and for asthma that is due primarily to inhaled allergens. The great majority of allergy patients will respond to Immunotherapy. The degree of improvement varies with each individual. In many patients the need for medication will decrease, however you may still need meds for overwhelming exposure or if your symptoms are severe. (So maybe you will spend less money on medications with time.)
- Immunotherapy can improve your asthma symptoms if your asthma is mainly induced / triggered by severe allergies, and possibly less medications will be required to control your asthma.
- Allergy shots are very helpful if you are allergic to multiple allergens (molds, dust, pollens, and animals.)

DISADVANTAGES

- Requires a commitment on the part of the patient. The allergy shots are given twice a week or weekly for the first year. The more compliant you are with this schedule the faster you will get to the maintenance dose and to have improvement in your allergy symptoms.
- You will have to take the allergy shots in a doctor's office and will need to be observed for at least 20 minutes after receiving your allergy shots.

OTHER INFORMATION YOU SHOULD KNOW

- Side effects are very uncommon. However, because you will be receiving extracts of allergens to which you are reactive, there is always a possibility of experiencing an allergic reaction after an injection. Most common are local reactions such as swelling, redness, or itching at the injection site. These reactions should not be increasing after each shot you receive, nor should they last longer than 24 hours. Our office should be notified of any persistent or large reactions you may have, as adjustment of your allergy shots may be necessary.
- Most severe reactions occur in the first 20-30 minutes after receiving the allergy shots. (This is the reason we ask you to wait in the office after your shot.) However, reactions can occur hours after receiving your allergy injections. Signs and symptoms of severe reactions ("generalized" or "systemic reaction") usually consist of worsening of the hay fever symptoms (increased sneezing, runny nose, or itchy throat) followed by severe itching, hives, chest congestion, "chocking", and / or wheezing. Fainting and a sudden drop in blood pressure can also occur. A few deaths have been reported when the reactions are refractory to treatment. Most of these severe reactions were reported in patients with severe asthma, in patients who did not wait the 20 minutes in the doctor's office, or in patients that did not report any of the symptoms to the medical staff and believed that if they wait awhile, they will "get better". Consequently, we ask that you report any unusual symptoms to the medical staff promptly.

(If you do experience signs or symptoms as noted above, and you are not in our office, you should use your EPI-PEN OR TWINJECT and then call 911. Take an antihistamine, like Benadryl, as soon as possible and apply ice to the injection sites).

- **IT IS MANDATORY AND IS THE PATIENTS RESPONSIBILITY TO CARRY THE EPI-PEN OR TWINJECT WITH THEM ON THE DAY OF ALLERGY INJECTIONS.**
- If you do choose to leave the office without proper caution, (before the 20 minutes time), you may do so on your own responsibility. (We may choose not to allow you to continue with taking allergy shots if this repeats).
- For further references you can check the following websites:
www.aaaai.org or www.acaai.org

Some other suggestions...

- Medications for asthma or other medical problems may be taken as usual on the day of an injection. Allergy medications do not interfere with allergy shots. You cannot be on a beta-blocker medication (such as Inderal, or Atenolol) while you are taking allergy shots. You will need to discuss this issue with your doctor if you are.
- Omit shots when you have a fever, asthma flare (wheezing, chest tightness); you have signs and symptoms of a sinus infection, a cold or bronchitis.
- Exercise or any strenuous activity must be avoided for 2 hours prior to receiving allergy shots and 3-4 hours after receiving allergy shots. Failure to do so may result in a systemic reaction.
- During pregnancy the maintenance dose of therapy is usually reduced or possibly stopped. Please inform your doctor if you become pregnant.
- When allergy extracts are supplied to you for administration by another physician, detailed instructions will accompany your extracts.
- A return visit should be scheduled at the end of the first year of being on allergy shots and yearly thereafter until therapy is stopped.

We hope that the discussion you had with Dr. Ispas-Ponas and the written forms provided have helped you to make an informed decision regarding allergy immunotherapy. If you should have any further questions or need more detailed information regarding allergy shots, please don't hesitate to contact Sonoran Allergy & Asthma Center, PC at (480) 563-9810. We would be very happy to provide you with any further information you should need.