



IMMUNOTHERAPY/ALLERGY SHOTS

What is Immunotherapy?

Immunotherapy is a treatment used to relieve allergy symptoms of hay fever or allergic asthma by administering injections of substances such as pollens, mold spores, dust mites, animal dander or insects to which an individual has been found to be allergic by skin testing. The mechanisms of its side effect are the subject of ongoing research. However, immunotherapy initiates processes that seem to "turn off" the abnormal immune reaction that we term "allergy".

When an allergic person is exposed to an allergenic substance (such as cat dander), he/she may develop symptoms of sneezing, runny nose, nasal congestion, watery eyes, chest tightness or wheezing. Various cells that line the nose and the airways actually release chemical mediators that cause these symptoms. Immunotherapy works to interfere with the actions of these cells and to thereby diminish the effects of the chemical mediators that cause allergic symptoms.

How are injections given and for how long?

During the "build-up" phase, increasing doses of your allergens are given one to three times a week until a predetermined target or "maintenance" dose is achieved. This usually takes 6-9 months. Once this maintenance dose is reached, shots are usually administered every 2-4 weeks over the ensuing several years of treatment. Clinical improvement with immunotherapy usually occurs in the first year. In a small percentage of patients there is no improvement and, in this case, immunotherapy is discontinued. If symptoms do improve, injections are usually continued for at least 4-5 years of maintenance therapy. At that time, you and your doctor will make a joint decision about whether to discontinue injections or to continue treatment.

Reactions to Immunotherapy:

Minor local reactions, including swelling, itching or tenderness at the site of the injection, occur in most patients receiving injections. The local reactions usually subside in one day or less.

Large local reactions are generalized (systemic) reactions may occur in 1-5% of patients receiving allergy injections and usually occur during the "build-up" phase, although they can occur at any time during the course of treatment. These types of reactions require a dosage adjustment. Generalized reactions may consist of any or all of the following symptoms: itchy eyes, nose or throat, nasal congestion, sneezing, tightness in the throat or chest, coughing and wheezing. In addition, some patients may experience lightheadedness, faintness, nausea and vomiting, hives, and under extreme conditions, shock. Reactions can be serious but are rarely fatal.

Allergy injections should be administered at a medical facility with a physician present since occasional reactions may require immediate therapy. As an added precaution, you **must wait** in the medical facility where you receive your injection for **30 minutes** after each injection so that in the unlikely event of generalized reaction, you can be quickly



Louanne M. Tourangeau, M.D

Hannah H. Walford, M.D

Jenna Nguyen, M.D

ALLERGY, ASTHMA & IMMUNOLOGY

1300 Crane Street. 2nd Floor

Menlo Park, Ca. 94025

(650) 498-6720: Nurse Line

tested and observed, thereby decreasing the likelihood of a more severe reaction. Please note that you should not exercise for 2 hours after receiving an injection.

Treatment of Reactions:

Minor local reactions that consist of swelling of the arm and redness or tenderness at the site of the injection are best handled with simple measures such as a local cold compress or the use of medications such as antihistamines or aspirin. Severe reactions that include chest symptoms are treated in the same way any asthmatic attack would be treated. If after you leave, you experience a generalized reaction from allergy injections, please either return to Menlo Medical Clinic or proceed to the nearest emergency room (ER).

Fees: What will this cost?

Menlo Medical Clinic charges you a quarterly fee for allergy extract or per shot fee depending on your insurance requirements. In addition, there is an injection fee every time an injection is given. Please consult the nurse for the exact charges as these may change over time. In the event you experience an allergy shot reaction at Menlo Medical Clinic, you will be responsible for any additional fees that are associated with the treatment of the reaction. Please notify our office if you decide to discontinue injections, or you will be responsible for changes associated with the preparation of the antigen.

Allergy Injection Hours

Monday	1:30pm – 4:30pm
Tuesday	2:00pm – 5:30pm
Wednesday	7:30am – 12:30pm
Thursday	2:00pm – 5:30pm
Friday	NO shot hours
Saturday	9:30am – 12:00 Noon *
Select Saturdays – See schedule	
Sunday	Clinic CLOSED

* Allergy clinic is closed on major holidays and Saturdays on a holiday weekend. When the clinic is closed for a holiday on Saturday, the clinic will be opened the following Saturday.

As a reminder, you MUST WAIT 30 MINUTES after each injection.