

reactions develop within 30 minutes of the injection. This is why you are required to wait 30 minutes in the doctor's office after an allergy shot, so if a serious reaction does occur, it can be treated. If systemic reactions occur, the patient and doctor should discuss what happened, see whether and how to continue immunotherapy.

Most adverse reactions to immunotherapy are due to errors in dosage and timing. Special care should be taken to ensure that the patient receives their vaccine at the correct dose at the correct time. Risk is reduced if you avoid exercising or overheating for a few hours before and after injection.

Before each injection report if you are unwell, have a fever, your asthma is uncontrolled or you had a reaction last time because reactions are more common in these situations. Caution is advised with beta blockers as systemic reactions might be more difficult to treat. If pregnancy occurs during allergy immunotherapy the vaccine is generally continued.

#### How Do I Get The Actual Allergy Vaccine?

When you and your doctor agree allergy shots are important for your treatment, a prescription is sent directly to Allergy Canada Ltd or take to your pharmacy which can then send it to Allergy Canada.

For direct to Allergy Canada prescriptions you will receive an invoice within a week. Because the

prescription is personal, payment is made to Allergy Canada before production. Payment can be securely made online at [www.allergycanada.com](http://www.allergycanada.com) or VISA / MasterCard / American Express / cheque/ money order/ which is mailed, telephoned, e-mailed or faxed. You can submit your receipt to your own drug plan. Allergy Canada does not deal directly with individual drug plans.

If the pharmacy manages the prescription you settle with them when you pick up the vaccine. The pharmacy may directly deal with your drug plan or benefits.

The vaccine box includes instructions about amounts of vaccine to be given and the timing schedule and is sent to the administering doctor or picked up from the pharmacy 3-4 weeks from order.

The initial cost covers injections until a maintenance vial is started. A new maintenance vial costs the same as an induction set. Allergy Canada vaccines are recognized as legitimate mainstream treatment and are reimbursed by the vast majority of drug plans, provincial health drug benefits, Federal plans and seniors are usually covered.

Allergy Canada vaccine is made specifically for each patient by the most qualified technicians in Canada, uses only the best materials, includes allergens to which you are allergic, and makes the vaccine according to the doctor's prescription, in a dedicated laboratory at doses proven to be effective.



**Allergy Canada Ltd**

## Allergy Vaccine



## Injection Immunotherapy

### What You Need To Know

Allergy Vaccine / Immunotherapy / Allergy Shots is the treatment for allergic disease. It shuts off / blocks the abnormal immune reaction that causes your allergic symptoms.

Allergy Vaccine Immunotherapy is injecting gradually increasing amounts of allergens you are allergic to, up to a dose that reduces reactions to usual exposure (tolerance). Immune tolerance means your immune system does not react to the allergen and cause symptoms. Allergen immunotherapy returns you to the normal condition: not reacting to common things in your environment. It's the only treatment that can do this.

Environmental control is necessary to reduce exposure, medicine helps reduce symptoms but only "allergy shots" can "cure" allergy.

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Allergen immunotherapy is safe and works for hayfever / allergic rhinitis-conjunctivitis, allergic asthma, stinging insects and in some eczema / atopic dermatitis.

"Shots" are highly cost-effective and result in long-term symptom reduction, improved quality of life, less medication used and fewer days off school and work. Allergy vaccine immunotherapy reduces the chances of new allergies. It may prevent asthma developing. Allergy vaccines have been proven effective for house dust mites, the pollens of trees, grasses, ragweed and moulds and animal danders. Immunotherapy is essential for preventing dangerous allergic reactions - anaphylaxis - to stinging insect venoms like wasp and hornets. Protection against future life threatening allergic sting reactions is over 95%.

The earlier allergy vaccine therapy is started the better the level of allergy protection.

Effectiveness in children age 4 years+ is similar to that in adults. Children less than 4 may cooperate less and may not be able to tell about adverse effects.

### **Who Can Benefit From Allergy Shots?**

Both children and adults can receive and benefit from immunotherapy. The decision to start allergy shots is based on a diagnosis of allergy, examination, confirmation of being allergic by skin prick or blood test, the length of allergy season, severity of your symptoms, how well medications work and if environmental controls are helping, the desire to avoid long-term medications, drug

side effects and the real potential to reverse the abnormality back towards normal.

### **What Is The Process For Allergy Shots?**

The injection strength, amount and timing follow the doctor's schedule which is sent with the vaccine. Follow the steps. All the liquid in each vial does not need to be used up. The doctor will make any adjustments for missed and delayed injections or reactions.

There are two injection phases.

**Build-up / Induction Phase** injections with increasing amounts of the allergens are given weekly. The length of this phase depends on the prescribing doctor's schedule for injections but generally is about four months. Before the end of the induction a new maintenance vaccine must be ordered. Order when indicated on the schedule to avoid interruption.

**Maintenance Phase** begins once the effective dose is reached and then injections are spaced out to about once a month. An additional maintenance vial is ordered each year. There are a number of injections closer together at the start of each maintenance vial. There is a one year expiry on allergy vaccines.

Maintenance treatment is generally continued for 3 to 5 years. Some patients may continue beyond 5 years. Any decision to stop allergy shots should be discussed with your doctor. It is important to keep on the schedule as long breaks may force you to start all over again.

Symptoms may decrease in the build up phase, but it usually takes at least 12 months on the maintenance dose to start improvement.

After completion of immunotherapy, long-term protection can be expected for at least a period of 3–5 years; often to 10 years and longer. Therapy can be repeated should symptoms return or new allergies occur.

### **The Injections!**

Immunotherapy shots are given with a small hypodermic syringe and fine needle under the skin ("subcutaneous") into the loose tissue over the outer back of the upper arm, half way between the shoulder and elbow. The injection might be only very slightly uncomfortable but not painful. Sometimes an antihistamine a few hours before an injection is used to reduce local discomfort and other side effects.

### **Are There Risks With Allergy Immunotherapy?**

A typical expected reaction might be redness, itchiness and swelling at the injection site. This can happen immediately or several hours after the needle. More rarely a large local reaction >5cm can occur but this is not a cause for concern or indicates there is an increased risk of a widespread reaction; there is no need to adjust dose. Sometimes an injection can increase allergy symptoms such as sneezing, nasal congestion or hives. Immunotherapy does not increase the risk of catching a cold. Serious reactions to allergy shots do rarely occur; they require immediate medical attention. Symptoms of such an anaphylactic reaction can include swelling in the throat, wheezing or tightness in the chest, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, low blood pressure and rarely shock. Most serious

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