

IMMUNOTHERAPY

Immunotherapy (allergy shots) is a process in which you receive injections comprised of substances to which you have allergies. The purpose of the injection program is to stimulate your immune system to make non-allergy antibodies which will minimize future allergy symptoms. The program is designed to be a long-term solution to a chronic problem and is intended to reduce your allergy symptoms and, therefore, your allergy medication requirements.

The initial phase of the program involves weekly injections of increasing strength to desensitize the patient to their airborne allergies. Most patients come to the office on a weekly basis for their injections and this phase of the program usually lasts 10 months. As the patient begins to reach the increased dosage levels, they will begin to see a decrease in their allergy symptoms and a reduction in their medication usage. Some patients experience relief early on in the program, but most will begin to find a reduction in their symptoms at the higher dosage levels.

The maintenance phase of the program begins at the highest dosage level that the patient can tolerate and the interval between injections is gradually increased to a monthly basis. This phase of the program usually lasts for a period of 2 to 4 years and is intended to provide the patient with continued and long-term relief from their allergy symptoms. The majority of patients will be able to successfully complete the program in 3 to 5 years with most of that time period spent receiving the injections on a monthly basis.

Appointments are not required for allergy shot visits and shots will be given during usual office hours as they are posted. Days in which the office will be closed will be posted in advance. You will be asked to remain in the office for twenty minutes after your injection so that the nurse can check to see that you are not having a reaction. Local swelling and itching at the site of the injection is the most common reaction and often resolves on it's own without intervention. Some patients may experience a larger local reaction that may be up to the size of a quarter or larger. Applying a cold pack to the injection site immediately after the injection can often minimize these reactions. The nurse will be happy to assist you with these packs. Larger reactions or reactions that trigger off upper or lower respiratory symptoms should be brought to the nurses attention. The nurses have been trained to be very thorough about asking and checking for any possible reactions and please feel free to discuss any questions you may have with them.

Immunotherapy is intended to be a long-term solution to a chronic problem and is a commitment you are making to your long-term health. Our staff is dedicated to provide you with the highest possible level of care and we are always available for your questions and healthcare needs.