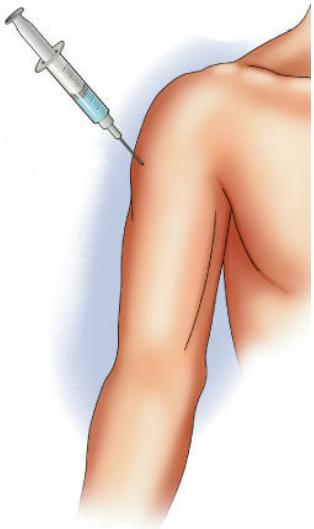
Allergy Shots, FAQ's
(Immunotherapy)

WHAT ARE ALLERGY SHOTS?
Allergy shots are a treatment used to help lessen allergy symptoms such as:
- Sneezing.
- Itchy, watery eyes.
- Runny, stuffy nose.
- Asthma.



WHAT MAY BE IN MY ALLERGY SHOT?
- Grass, tree and weed pollens.
- Insects.
- Animal dander (old skin scales which your animal is always shedding).
- Dust mites.
- Molds.

HOW DO ALLERGY SHOTS HELP MY ALLERGY SYMPTOMS?
Allergy shots "turn down" your body's reaction to the things you are allergic to.

HOW OFTEN DO I GET MY ALLERGY SHOT?
Every week until you safely "build up" to your "maintenance dose."

WHAT IS THE MAINTENANCE DOSE?
It is the dose that gives you the most relief from your allergy symptoms.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE TO GET TO A MAINTENANCE DOSE?
If you keep all your appointments and you have no reactions, it may take 5 - 7 months.

WHAT IF I MISS AN ALLERGY SHOT?
Missing appointments makes it take longer for you to get to your maintenance dose. It is very important to keep all your appointments. If you miss one, call to make another appointment and tell the nurse at your next appointment.

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE COMMON REACTIONS TO ALLERGY SHOTS?
Most common reactions include redness and puffiness (*swelling*) where the shot was given. This reaction is mild and goes away on its own.

Less common reactions are:
- Itchy eyes, nose, or throat.
- Sneezing, runny nose.
- Red bumps (hives).
- Trouble breathing.
- Coughing.
- Wheezing.
- Scratchy throat.
- Tightness in chest.

Caution: If you notice any reaction within 24 hours, report this to the allergy nurse before getting your next shot.

WHY MUST I STAY AFTER I GET MY ALLERGY SHOT?

For your safety, you must stay in the clinic for up to 30 minutes after getting the allergy shot. Before you leave, the nurse will check for any reaction at the place where the shot was given.

WHEN WILL MY ALLERGY SYMPTOMS GET BETTER?

Allergy shots begin to work shortly after you begin treatment, but your allergy symptoms may not get better for 4 to 6 months.

WHAT DO I DO IF I FEEL SICK ON THE DAY OF MY ALLERGY SHOT?

Tell the nurse before you get your shot.

WHEN MIGHT I STOP GETTING MY ALLERGY SHOTS?

- Usually after you have been getting allergy shots for about 3 to 5 years.
- If the shots do not work for you.
- If you start taking a type of medicine called a beta blocker (beta blockers are commonly used for lowering blood pressure).
- If you miss many of the appointments for your shots.
- If you do not follow the instructions given to you by your allergy clinic staff.

Attention: Tell your doctor if you start any new medicines while you are getting allergy shots.

GET HELP RIGHT AWAY IF YOU HAVE:

- Trouble breathing.
- Red bumps on your skin (*hives*) within 24 hours after your shot. Tell the doctor or nurse that you had an allergy shot that day.

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