

# THE TRUTH ABOUT ALLERGY SHOTS



You might not think about them very often, but allergies can shape your life in serious ways. An allergy to pet dander can prevent you from adopting the puppy you've always wanted. Hay fever and seasonal allergies can make you dread the outdoors no matter how beautiful the summer sunsets may be. When you have allergies, you can miss out on a lot. That's why allergy shots have become an incredibly popular and potent way for long-term allergy sufferers to find enduring relief.

With allergy immunotherapy you can start keeping your allergy symptoms at bay. And that means you can stop worrying about what might make you sneeze and start making decisions based on what you enjoy.

## WHAT IS AN ALLERGY SHOT?

Avoiding your triggers is the best start to the self-help process. Allergy shots, also known as immunotherapy, are an effective way of managing persistent allergy and asthma symptoms over the long term. Each injection contains a tiny amount of allergen--the substance that causes your allergic reaction--in order to build up a lasting immunological resistance.

Unlike pills, inhalers, or other medications, allergy shots provide lasting relief from symptoms, so you can enjoy daily activities without having to worry about what's

in your medicine cabinet or how many pills you have stashed in your purse. Most patient's allergy relief lasts long after their treatment course is done!

Allergy shots can treat multiple allergies at the same time. Under the tongue tab immunotherapy treats only one allergy (*ragweed or grass or dust mite*).

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## HOW DO ALLERGY SHOTS WORK?



Allergy shots work by exposing your immune system to small, but increasing, amounts of allergens. The exact composition of your injection will be specifically customized for you and your set of allergens. Your allergens are determined by a skin test. If you're allergic to cat dander, pollen, and dust mites, your injection will include mixed quantities of these particular antigens in a formulation customized just for you.

The injections will carry just enough allergens to alert your immune system, but not enough to cause a full blown allergic reaction. Over time, it takes greater and greater amounts of this allergen to cause a reaction.

### THE ALLERGY SHOT PROCESS

For every patient, your allergy shots will be divided into two phases:

**Buildup Phase:** During this phase, the focus of treatments will be on desensitizing your immune system to your chosen allergens. The buildup phase usually requires 1-3 injections twice a week for a duration of 3-6 months. The amount of allergen in the injections will regularly be increased in order to successfully desensitize your immune system to those particular substances.

**Maintenance Phase:** Once your immune system becomes effectively desensitized to the allergens you're targeting, you'll need to maintain your results in order to keep symptoms at bay. This usually requires ongoing injections that are gradually stretched out to one injection per month for a duration of 3-5 years.

Allergy shots can begin providing protection during the buildup phase and will provide lasting protection throughout the remainder of the process. Maximum improvement is normally seen at the end of the second year of therapy. The decision to stop allergy shots should be made in conjunction with your doctor. Many people who finish the full 5-year course of allergy shot treatments will experience a permanent reduction in allergy symptoms.



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**WHO ARE ALLERGY SHOTS FOR?**

Allergy shots are an effective treatment for those who suffer from chronic or continuous allergic reactions or allergy symptoms. In general, the best candidates for allergy shots will be those who:

- Suffer from multiple allergies (those who suffer from only one allergy may be better served by other treatment options).
- Medications have not been able to alleviate your allergy symptoms or you no longer wish to take allergy medications for relief.
- You can't or don't want to avoid allergens. For example, if you want to enjoy spending time with the family kitten, but you are allergic to cats, allergy shots can help.
- You suffer from seasonal allergies.
- You are allergic to bee, wasp, yellow jacket, or hornet stings.

**ALLERGY SHOTS DO NOT HELP:**

- Food allergies.
- Chronic hives.

2 - 3% of patients who undergo allergy shots do sometimes encounter allergic reactions or other rare complications during their 5-year allergy shot treatment period. In some very rare instances, anaphylaxis or death has been recorded. That's why patients are required to spend 30 minutes under observation in our clinic after every allergy shot treatment.



# IT'S TIME TO START ENJOYING YOUR ALLERGY-FREE LIFE



## ARE ALLERGY SHOTS WORTH IT?

Those who suffer from chronic, seasonal, or indoor allergies will likely experience clear and profound benefits from allergy shot treatments. Benefits of these immunotherapy injections include:

- The ability to enjoy outdoor activities without having to worry about your allergies. You won't have to take a medication that could make you unbearably drowsy before your child's soccer game.
- You won't have to worry so much about insect stings while you're out on a hike. Those who are allergic to insects will have an additional layer of peace of mind.
- You'll be able to enjoy extended stays outside even when your allergies used to flare up horribly. Maybe you had to avoid long camping trips in the past. With allergy shots you'll be able to take those long outdoor trips without buying medication in bulk.

- There will be fewer limits on your activities. You'll be able to focus on what you enjoy doing instead of being limited by sneezing, headaches, and other allergic reactions.
- You can enjoy lasting desensitisation to your allergens. Even after your maintenance injections stop, you could enjoy a permanent reduction in symptoms.
- Every allergy shot is custom created just for you and your specific types of allergens.

If you think an allergy shot immunotherapy treatment could help you get a handle on your allergies, contact our offices to schedule a consultation with Dr. Bubak. It's time to start enjoying your allergy-free life.



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