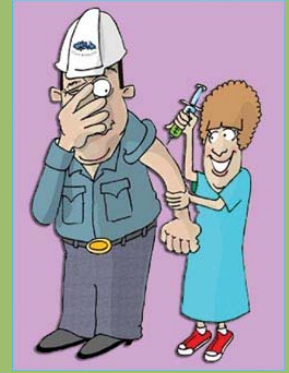


Allergy shots



Allergy and Asthma Clinic

Are they right for you?



Allergy shots, also called "immunotherapy," are given to increase your tolerance to the substances (allergens) that provoke allergy symptoms. They usually are recommended for people who suffer from severe allergies. They do not necessarily cure allergies, but reduce your sensitivity to certain substances.

How Often Are Allergy Shots Given?

Allergy shots are given regularly (in the upper arm), with gradually increasing doses. When starting immunotherapy, you will need to go to your healthcare provider once or twice a week for several months. The dose is increased each time until the maintenance dose is reached. If the shots are effective, you will go to your healthcare provider every 2 to 4 weeks for 2 to 5 more years. You may become less sensitive to allergens during this time, and your allergy symptoms will become milder and may even go away completely.

How Should I Prepare for Allergy Shots?

For two hours before and after your appointment, do not exercise or engage in vigorous activity. Exercise may increase your risk of a severe reaction to the allergy shot.

Tell your doctor about all the medications you are taking. Some medications, such as beta blockers, can interfere with the treatment and/or increase the risk of side effects. You may have to stop allergy shots if you are taking these medications.

Talk to your doctor if you are pregnant or planning to become pregnant.

What Should I Expect After Allergy Shots?

Usually, you will be monitored for about 30 minutes after receiving an allergy shot to make sure that you don't develop side effects such as itchy eyes, shortness of breath, runny nose, or tight throat. If you develop these symptoms after you leave the doctor's office, take an antihistamine and /or EpiPen and go back to your doctor's office or go to the nearest emergency room.

Redness, swelling, or irritation within one inch of the site of the injection is normal. These symptoms should go away within 4 to 8 hours after receiving the shot.

Are Allergy Shots Effective for All Allergies?

In general, immunotherapy is effective for allergies to stinging insects, a variety of pollens, dust mites, molds and pet dander, as well as for allergic asthma. Immunotherapy is not proven to be effective for hives or food allergy