

## **Allergy Shot Information**

**Purpose:** The purpose of Immunotherapy or “Allergy Shots” is to make the patient less sensitive to one or more specific allergens (pollens, dust mites, molds, animals). Your body responds to injected amounts of a particular allergen given in increasing doses, eventually developing a resistance and tolerance to it. It is used for patients whose symptoms are not controlled with medications and allergy avoidance alone. Immunotherapy has been proven to reduce symptoms of hay fever, conjunctivitis, and allergic asthma.

**Process:** Allergies are the result of a chain reaction that starts in the immune system. Your immune system controls how your body defends itself. For example, with a pollen allergy, your immune system identifies the pollen as an invader and overreacts by producing antibodies called Immunoglobulin E. These antibodies travel to cells that release chemicals, causing an allergic reaction.

**Consistency and Timing:** The allergy serum is made specific for each patient based upon skin testing. Injections are typically given weekly during the build-up phase, this takes approximately 6 months and involves receiving injections with increasing amounts of the allergens. If you go past 14 days, it will result in either a repeat or a decrease from the last dose given, and may take you longer to reach maintenance.

**Maintenance:** The maintenance phase begins when the most effective dose is reached. This dose is different for each person, depending on how allergic you are and your response during the build-up phase. Once the maintenance dose is reached, immunotherapy is generally continued for 3 to 5 years. Some may experience decreased allergy symptoms during the build-up phase. For others, it may take as long as 12 months on the maintenance dose.

**Expiration:** Your serum will last for 1 year. Each year you will meet with the Allergist to evaluate your therapy, if renewed, a new bottle of serum will be ordered. Since this serum is fresher, you will go back a few doses and receive weekly injections until maintenance is again achieved.

**Children:** Immunotherapy for children age five and older is effective and often well tolerated. It might prevent the onset of new allergen sensitivities or the progression to asthma. An adult must accompany children under 15 years of age, and must wait in the reception area with the patient at all times. We will need a signed parental emergency consent form for patients 15-18 years old to receive injections without a parent. If you notice any problems at home with the shots your child received, please give us a call to let us know. We ask each time about any problems, but sometimes they forget to tell us.

**Safety:** Injection of a substance you are allergic to poses a potential emergency situation. Though general reactions are rare, for safety, no shots are given without medical supervision. Emergency drugs and oxygen are always on hand. Given properly in a doctor’s office or clinic, allergy shots are considered safe and effective.

**Waiting Period:** After your injection, you will remain in the waiting room for **30 minutes** or longer so that any reactions to the injections can be recognized and treated immediately. The nurse must check the injection site before you leave the office. This is for your safety. If you must use the restroom, alert a staff person.

**Antihistamines:** Patients may take an antihistamine the day prior to injection, the morning of injection, and subsequently to prevent or relieve injection site itchiness and swelling.

## Allergy Shot Information (cont'd)

**Local Reactions:** You may notice minor local pain, redness, swelling or irritation at the injection site. These local reactions typically clear up within 4-8 hours.

**Systemic Reactions:** Rarely, a systemic reaction may occur. These usually occur within 30 minutes after an injection, but can occur up to several hours later. This is a serious reaction, and it is important that we treat it immediately.

Signs and symptoms of a systemic reaction include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Sneezing; nasal congestion; coughing.
2. Generalized itching; itchy eyes, nose, ears, mouth, and/or throat.
3. Hives; face and skin flush.
4. Feeling hot; dizzy; lightheaded; nausea/vomiting
5. Wheezing; tightness of the throat; difficulty breathing.

These wide spread reactions are less common, but potentially more serious. If you have a systemic reaction after leaving the clinic (or believe you may be having one), administer epinephrine and call 911. Please notify our office if this occurs.

**Allergy Shot Hours:** Monday through Thursday 8:00 am to 4:00pm, except Wednesday closed 11:30-1:00.

**Office Hours:** Monday through Thursday 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Friday 8:00 am to 12:00 pm.

**Holidays and Vacations:** The Walla Walla Clinic observes all major holidays. We are closed New Year's Day, Memorial Day, July 4<sup>th</sup>, Labor Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve and Christmas. Please watch for "bright pink" notices posted in shot room and waiting room with other office closure days.

### Allergy Injection guidelines

- During pollen season it may be necessary to adjust the injection schedule by moving up more slowly.
- **Heavy exercise** and after school sports is not advised for 1-2 hours before or after allergy injections.
- You should **NOT** receive an allergy injection if:
  1. You are wheezing, or having increased asthma symptoms.
  2. You have a fever.
  3. You have a severe sunburn.
  4. You have recently mowed the lawn or are having increased allergy symptoms.

### Before your injection notify nurse if:

1. There have been any changes in your medical condition or any new medications.
2. You had any reactions to your last injections (locals more than a quarter size), or any delayed reactions (locals lasting more than 24 hrs).
3. You are pregnant or think you may be pregnant.

**In consideration of our asthma and allergy patients, please do not wear perfumes, colognes or fragrance lotions in this office. Thank you.**

If you have any problems, we encourage you to call us at 509-525-3720 ext 1604

Sincerely,

Dr. Anthony Nguyen  
Cathy, RN / Patty, RN