

## What are the advantages of immunotherapy by the drop method?

More patients are able to be treated using this method due to its excellent safety profile.

In comparison to the cost of allergy shots, allergy drops cost less and require fewer visits to the doctor's office. Only a few visits are necessary during the first year of treatment, and once every 6-12 months after that while on treatment.

Allergy drops can be taken at home, or anywhere else you need to be, making it easier to stick with your treatment schedule. Many patients find that they need fewer other medications to control their allergy symptoms after starting on allergy drops.

Patients simply seem to feel better. Fewer clinic visits, hospitalizations, and less time lost from work or school have been reported when patients take their drops consistently.

## Are allergy drops right for me?

It has been found that patients who can't tolerate or don't respond to allergy shots, and those who haven't found relief elsewhere have found allergy drops beneficial.

These include:

- Oral allergy drops may be an add on to regular allergy shots or even a replacement for patents currently on allergy shots.
- Treating young children is one of the best advantages of allergy drops. It has been found that children suffering from chronic ear infections and eczema usually have underlying allergies. Research shows that if left untreated, many will develop asthma and other chronic conditions later in life. Thus early treatment can reduce the chance of more severe conditions developing later.



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### Locations

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# Oral Allergy Drops

Sublingual Immunotherapy



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Approximately 25% of the population is affected by allergies. However, only a small number of all these people are treated by a method that would modulate the progressive course of their disease, and potentially prevent asthma. This is called Allergen-Specific Immunotherapy. There are two types of immunotherapy available: Subcutaneous allergy injections (SCIT) and Sublingual immunotherapy (SLIT).

Immunotherapy is a unique treatment option designed to reduce or eliminate allergy symptoms by inducing tolerance to an offending allergen. It involves administering gradually increasing amounts of an allergen over a period of time.

An allergy evaluation starts with a comprehensive visit with allergy testing to determine what you are allergic to. After a thorough analysis, immunotherapy may be recommended as part of your treatment regimen in addition to medications.

## Sublingual Immunotherapy

- Also called allergy drops, this method is the regular administration of gradually increasing doses of allergens by mouth, placed under the tongue, then swallowed.
- Convenience of self-administered treatment in the comforts of the patients home, work or travel.
- The length of treatment depends on how sensitive the patient is. (Average of 3-5 years)
- Possible quicker onset of efficacy, usually within 3-4 months.
- Fewer visits to the doctor's office make it less expensive.
- Eliminates the need for weekly buildup of injections which makes it very cost effective.
- There is low potential for severe side effects.
- Safe for children (>3 years old) and an alternative for patients who dislike injections or who are not candidates for injection therapy.
- May be an add on or replacement for patients currently on traditional allergy shots.
- Has an off-label indication and not covered by insurance companies.

## SUBLINGUAL IMMUNOTHERAPY

### How does it work?

Oral Allergy Drops (SLIT) are similar to allergy shots because it delivers a slowly increasing dose of allergens prescribed by your physician that builds up the body's tolerance over time. Drops are different from shots because they are placed under the tongue where they affect the immune system through very specialized cells found in the mouth. These cells have been found to be an effective route for long-term tolerance. Thus, SLIT is a very good option for patients who are not candidates for shots, have "needle phobia," or find it inconvenient to come in for weekly allergy shots.

## Subcutaneous Allergy Injections

- Allergy serum is formulated into one or more sets of treatment vials for each patient. This formulation is created from a patient's clinical history, examination and allergy test results to individualize serum for treatment. By injecting small amounts of particular allergen, in gradually increasing doses, the body builds up and immunity to the allergen(s).
- The injections are first given on a weekly basis, lasting four to six months. When the maintenance level is reached, the schedule can be stretched to a two to four week interval.
- Generally, patients receive injections for three to five years, or longer.
- These injections are only given in a physician's office, and patients must remain in the office for 30 minutes following the injection(s).
- Reactions can occur, ranging from redness and swelling to more serious, anaphylactic reactions such as cough, wheezing or tightness in the chest.
- Approved by the FDA for subcutaneous injection of approved allergy extracts.

### Are allergy drops safe and effective?

Oral Allergy drops are created from the same FDA approved serum utilized in regular allergy shots. SLIT in the United States has an "off-label" indication. Off-label refers to the administration of an FDA-Approved product or treatment in a manner for which it was not intended or for treatment of a disease for which it was not approved. SLIT has been used around the world for more than 60 years. Numerous studies have shown that they are safe and effective, it has been endorsed by the World Health Organization as an alternative to injection therapy.

Common side effects include:

Itching, swelling, tingling and numbness in your mouth or tongue. A rare side effect would be anaphylaxis, which would require immediate action.