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ALLERGY SHOT INFORMATION SHEET

It has been determined that you would benefit from receiving immunotherapy (allergy shots). To answer some of the more common questions, we have written this patient information sheet.

How Allergy Shots Work

The principle of immunotherapy is to change an allergic person's response to the things they are allergic to. By giving high doses of the material you are allergic to, the allergic response is stopped or markedly reduced.

In the beginning of your treatment course, you will be given low doses of the material you are allergic to. These doses will be increased over a number of weeks and months, until you are exposed to very high doses of specific allergen(s). This should relieve your allergy symptoms in nine to twelve months.

How often?

For most patients, allergy shots are given weekly for approximately nine months. "Weekly" allergy shots may be given more frequently (up to twice a week), provided forty-eight hours have passed since the last dose. Once you have achieved the highest dose that is suitable for you, you will be considered to be on a "maintenance dose", and your shots will decrease in frequency until they are four weeks apart. The full course of initial treatment is usually five years. Shots may be given twice a week as well, which will decrease the weekly shot regimen to approximately 4 ½ months. Shots may be administered by your primary care physician's office. If this is more convenient, please let us know.

Side Effects

The most common side effects of allergy shots are swelling and itching in the area of the shot. Please note the size and duration of this local reaction, for example, dime, quarter, or fifty-cent piece size. Ice may be applied to the area of swelling and antihistamines may be used if they have been prescribed. Rarely, more severe reactions occur, such as hayfever, asthma, and generalized body swelling, which may be life threatening if not immediately treated by a physician. It is for this reason that we ask you to stay in our office twenty to thirty minutes after receiving an injection. If the shot brings on your allergy symptoms, be sure to inform us as soon as possible.

Missing Shots

If it is necessary to miss an occasional dose, adjustments are made. Allergy shots may be withheld if you are ill, especially with asthma, so please call our office to discuss your illness prior to coming for your injections. Your shot schedule will not be significantly changed unless more than 28 days have passed since your last dose.

If you have any further questions about allergy shots, please feel free to ask.