



## What is immunotherapy?

Your pet's immunotherapy is composed of the offending allergens that are triggering your pet's immune system. Immunotherapy is the safest and most specific long-term therapy for environmental allergies in humans and animals. It works with the immune system to build tolerance or desensitize the patient to offending allergens. Once tested, your pet's formula will be created into an individualized allergy vaccine. The vaccine will be administered from home. Immunotherapy and symptomatic medical treatment may be used together to provide the best results. Some examples of these medications may include Apoquel®, Cytopoint® or Atopica®.

### Benefits of Immunotherapy

- No suppression to immune system
- No side effects
- Prevention of progression of clinical signs

### How soon should I see some improvement?

Approximately 70 – 80% of patients will benefit from this treatment within the first year. Some patients may show improvement within 3 – 6 months. Yet, others may take 6 – 18 months of treatment before significant response is noted.

### How long will my pet need to be on immunotherapy?

Immunotherapy allows short-term control of the immune system that causes the signs of atopy. Therefore, the therapy should be continued long term.

### How do we control the allergies while immunotherapy has time to take effect?

Any anti-itch medication can be used with immunotherapy short or long term. Topical therapy and strict flea control should also be used on a year-round basis.



## Monitor for adverse reactions

Monitor your pet for 30 minutes after administration. Symptoms of adverse reactions include vomiting, diarrhea, weakness, collapse, hives, facial swelling, or difficulty breathing. Any combination of two or more symptoms could result in anaphylaxis which is life threatening. Most patients do not experience any adverse reactions. If your pet is the rare exception, give an IMMEDIATE dose of an oral antihistamine then contact your family veterinarian, our office or the nearest emergency service.

## Over the counter (OTC) antihistamines

- Antihistamines may be an effective monotherapy or used in conjunction with your allergen specific immunotherapy protocol to add additional itch control.
- To determine which OTC antihistamine is most effective for your pet, it is recommended to trial the selected medication for a minimum of 10 – 14 days before deciding if it is beneficial.
- Please limit use to one type of antihistamine at a time.
- You do not have to try all antihistamine options if you have found one type that is helpful for our pet.
- Do not purchase antihistamines that are combination products.
- Ulti-symptom, cold/flu medicines, decongestants, etc. can be harmful to your pet.
- DO NOT USE ANY PRODUCTS THAT CONTAIN PSEUDOEPHEDRINE; especially products that contain decongestants, often labeled with a D, as in Zyrtec-D®
- These products often contain a high level of stimulants that are toxic and can be life-threatening to animals.
- Products containing acetaminophen (active ingredient in Tylenol®) are deadly for cats.

## Over-the-counter antihistamines for treatment trial

Your Fur Kid's specific dose will be provided by your dermatologist. Examples of recommended antihistamines are listed below:

- **Allegra®** (fexofenadine) 30mg / 60mg / 180mg tablet.
  - Recommended dose is administered by mouth TWICE daily (*without decongestant*)
- **Zyrtec®** (cetirizine) 10mg tablet
  - Recommended dose is administered by mouth TWICE daily (*without decongestant*)
- **Claritin®** (loratadine) 10 mg tablet
  - Recommended dose is administered by mouth TWICE daily (*without decongestant*)
- **Benadryl®** (diphenhydramine) 25mg tablet/capsule
  - Recommended dose is administered by mouth TWO or THREE times daily (*without decongestant*)



## FAQ

### [My pet had a blood test for allergies. Why do I have to retest my Fur Kid?](#)

Intradermal allergy testing is the most accurate and reliable method for determining environmental allergies. Successful immunotherapy is best achieved when using results from in vivo (*skin*) testing vs. in vitro (*blood*) testing.

### [Can you test my pet for food allergy?](#)

The only test you can perform for adverse food reaction is a dietary trial. Skin, serum, saliva or hair testing is completely unreliable. Food elimination trials extend for a period of 30 to 60 days. During that time, nothing should be consumed by your Fur Kid other than the prescribed diet.

### [Is my Fur Kid allergic to dyes in food?](#)

No! Although people often react to red food dye; food dyes and additives are rarely implicated in dogs or cats.

### [Can ear infections be secondary to allergies?](#)

Yes! Many Fur Kids suffer from ear infections as a result of their underlying allergies. Treating the underlying cause will reduce the reoccurrence of ear infections in the future.

### [Do pets get contact allergies?](#)

Your Fur Kid coat protects the skin and provides a barrier against most contact allergies. Because of this, most pets avoid contact allergies. It is extremely rare for a cat to experience contact allergies of any type.



## What's in my allergy vaccine?

Each allergy formula is an individual custom-made prescription created solely for your Fur Kid. The formula is processed in our lab based on results from your Fur Kid's intradermal skin test. Please allow at least 1 – 2 weeks for this custom prescription to be filled. Once your custom vaccine has been prepared, it can be picked up in our clinic or shipped directly to you for an additional fee. Keep in mind, allergens are temperature sensitive and therefore require overnight shipping services.

## How do I refill my Fur Kids allergy vaccine?

Please plan ahead and allow at least 2 weeks lead time when ordering any prescription refill. For your convenience, our automated phone system allows for direct access to the pharmacy line by pressing option 2. Simply leave your name, Fur Kid name, contact information and prescriptions requiring refill. We will contact you when your prescription is ready. Allergen refills require pre-payment due to the specific nature of the prescription.

## Can my prescriptions be shipped?

We are happy to expedite medication delivery by shipping directly to your physical address. If you prefer this added convenience, please indicate this request at the time of ordering your refill. We are unable to ship to P.O. Boxes and highly recommend someone is available to sign for allergens as they are temperature sensitive. Controlled drugs are not eligible for shipping. All orders to be shipped require pre-payment.

## What if I miss a dose?

During the build-up phase, it is especially important not to miss a dose. If you miss a scheduled dose, give the missed dose the next day. Do NOT give an extra dose at any time, regardless of duration period on immunotherapy. If your pet has not had a dose in 14 days or more, please contact us for further instructions BEFORE resuming allergen therapy.