



Allergy Shots

If over the counter or prescription medications don't relieve your seasonal, pet or dust mite allergy symptoms or if these treatments cause you too many side effects, your Allergist may recommend allergy shots.

Also known as Immunotherapy, allergy shots help your body adjust to an allergen by injecting small amounts of the allergen into your system over time. Allergy shots can be effective in reducing reactions to environmental or stinging insect allergies, but not food allergies.

The goal is to get your body used to the allergens that cause your allergic reaction and decrease your need for prescription or over the counter medications. Allergy shots, which are typically given weekly, may be especially effective if you're allergic to pet dander, dust mites or pollen produced by trees, grasses or weeds. In children, immunotherapy may help prevent the development of asthma.

Because the allergen must be introduced to your immune system gradually, it will take some time—sometimes up to one year—for the shots to have an effect. This time period is known as build up phase. Though NOT A CURE, allergy shots can significantly reduce allergy symptoms, even during build up phase, in some people who are unable to avoid allergens or who do not respond well to other treatment options.

If treatment is effective, allergy shots often continue three to five years, until the person is symptom free or until symptoms can be controlled with mild medications for one year.

Allergy-related asthma should be well controlled before receiving allergy shots, since side effects of the shots can worsen that condition. Generally the side effects of allergy shots are minor, including redness and warmth at the shot site. There is always risk of a rare but severe allergic reaction, such as anaphylaxis, so shots should always be administered at a medical facility where emergency treatment is available.

If you have uncontrolled asthma, heart or lung disease, or take certain medications, allergy shots may not be safe for you. If you are pregnant, additional precautions should be taken to ensure your safety as well as the baby's. It is not recommended to start taking allergy shots during pregnancy, but treatment already started may continue with precautions.

If you have questions about Allergy Shots, feel free to contact our office. One of our staff would be happy to answer your questions about Allergy Shots and the different treatment options for the management of allergies and asthma which are offered at Allergy & Asthma Clinics of Ohio.