



Allergy Shots

Subcutaneous Immunotherapy (SCIT)

California – Fremont, Oakland, Redwood City · Idaho – Eagle · Oregon – Beaverton, Clackamas, Gresham, McMinnville, Newberg, Tigard · Washington – Bellevue, Fisher's Landing, Longview, Salmon Creek

What are Allergy Shots?

Allergic reactions occur when your immune system marks a substance, like pollen, as a foreign invader. As your body tries to fight off this “invader,” you develop symptoms like a runny nose, sneezing, itchy eyes, or a cough. Allergy shots, or subcutaneous immunotherapy, are used to train your immune system to stop overreacting to these harmless substances, also known as allergens. Allergy shots are effective for managing symptoms caused by environmental allergens such as dust, pollens, molds, weeds, trees, cats, dogs, and more.

Your provider may recommend allergy shots to treat conditions like seasonal allergies, allergic asthma, eye allergies, and hives.

Allergy shots introduce a very small amount of the allergens into your body in the form of an extract. This small amount of the allergen in your body allows your immune system to get used to the substance so that you no longer develop symptoms. Your allergy shot vials will contain a custom mix of the substances you are allergic to in the form of extracts as determined by your allergy tests. The number of vials you will need is determined based on your specific needs.

Building Schedule

Our standard protocol has 45 steps (doses) to build up to maintenance. Building on allergy shots requires at least one day in between shots. Injections are typically given two to three times per week. Maintenance can be reached in 7-12 months. The length of time to maintenance will vary based on the number of injections per week and dose adjustments that are needed due to local or systemic reactions, illness, when overdue for an injection and when starting new bottles.

- 2-10 days since last dose: dose may be increased
- 11-20 days: dose may be repeated
- 21 days or more: dose will be decreased

Maintenance Schedule

Once maintenance level is reached the process of extending the time between injections begins.

- Week 1, Week 2, Week 4, Week 7, Week 11:
Maintenance Dose given

The maintenance dose is then given every 14 to 28 days. Maintenance is continued for 3-5 years. You should speak to your provider before discontinuing treatment.

You will be required to wait 30 minutes after your injection to monitor for a local or systemic shot reaction.

Local Reactions

Symptoms that take place at the shot site are considered local reactions. Itching, redness, swelling, and mosquito bite type bumps are typical examples of this type of reaction. The site will be measured prior to you leaving the office and recorded. Ice and antihistamines may be used to lessen the discomfort from these symptoms.

Systemic Reactions

Reactions that take place away from the shot site are considered systemic reactions. It is a good idea to do a body inventory prior to your injection; make a mental note of any active allergy symptoms for the day, headaches, upset stomach, etc. This will best help the medical staff in determining any change in condition after the shot. After your injections, note any new symptoms and tell your medical team! A tickle or clearing of throat, postnasal drainage, sneezing, coughing, wheezing, tight chest or shortness of breath, abdominal cramping, hives, itching, or difficulty swallowing can all indicate a systemic reaction.

**WARNING: this treatment along with all allergy desensitization treatments carries a risk of anaphylaxis, a potentially life-threatening condition which can rarely lead to respiratory and/or cardiac arrest and possibly death.*

Your medical staff is prepared to manage any reaction that may occur during your appointment.

Reminders for Appointments

- **Take an antihistamine at least 30 minutes prior to arrival/receiving your allergy shot.**
- **Illness:** wait at least 3 days after the start of symptoms, and you must have at least 80-90% improvement in symptoms prior to receiving shots
- **If taking antibiotics:** you must feel 80%-90% better and be on them for at least 3 days
- **Asthma Exacerbation:** peak flow meter reading must be within 15% of your baseline to receive a shot
- **Major surgery:** need at least 1 full week recovery before next injection

- **Dental:** cleanings are okay on day of injection, but you must wait 24 hours after a procedure involving anesthetics to receive a shot
- **DO NOT** get a vaccine or have another treatment the same day as your allergy shot
- Avoid exercise, hot tubs, hot showers, physical therapy, and sun exposure 2 hours before and 2 hours after your injection
- Notify your provider if you are taking a Beta-Blocker (ends in -olol)

You are required to bring an epinephrine auto-injector with you to EVERY allergy shot appointment to use in case of a severe allergic reaction. If you use this medication, call 911 and go to the ER.

Communication with Staff

Communication with staff regarding any reactions is VERY important to maintain shot safety. Follow up appointments are required at: 3 and 9 months after start shot date, and when patient reaches maintenance. After maintenance, non-asthma patients see their provider every year or when new bottles are needed, and asthma patients follow up every 6 months.

Mixing of Serums

New vials containing your custom allergy extracts are made every 6-12 months. They are made when you run out of your custom extract or when your extracts expire to ensure the maximum benefit from your treatment.

Options for Faster Treatment

Ask your provider if you are a candidate for cluster or rush allergy shots. These options allow for multiple injections in a single appointment to finish the building phase faster.

Shot Clinic Locations and Hours

Visit our website at www.columbiaallergy.com to find your nearest clinic and see the shot clinic hours!