

JANUARY NEWSLETTER

**HAPPY
NEW
YEAR!**

Our Columbia Allergy staff wants to wish you and your families all the best in the new year! We look forward to continuing to provide exceptional care and to continuing to adjust to meet the needs of our patients during this challenging time.



**SUNNYVALE
OFFICE
MERGER**

As of Monday January 11th, 2021, our Sunnyvale office will be closing permanently. The great news is Dr. Renu Gandhe and her fantastic office staff will be moving to the Fremont clinic, which is right across the Bay, east of Sunnyvale. Our Fremont office offers more procedures, more extensive services and clinic hours, and a greater number of exam rooms. Our staff is here to help ensure a smooth transition from Sunnyvale to our Fremont office. For any questions email contact@aa-clinic.com.

**FREMONT
OFFICE
HIGHLIGHTS**



- More exam rooms and OIT suites
- Offers food allergy treatments with Dr. Jain, Dr. Yan and Dr. Gandhe
- Offers Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) with Dr. Yan
- Offers Precision Immune Targeting, also known as Ultrasound-Guided Intralymphatic Immunotherapy (ILIT), with Radiologist Dr. Kiren Jain

*As a reminder, our San Mateo office has also merged with our Redwood City office.

**COVID RISK
ASSESSMENT**

Your continued safety is our top priority throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. The next few months will be very, very challenging because of the exponential rise in the number of coronavirus cases.

Many states have implemented stay at home orders as an attempt to combat the limited number of ICU beds in hospitals. The vaccines are expected to be available to most persons during the spring and summer months, but in the meantime we at Columbia Allergy want to do all that we can to keep your immune system strong and guide you towards maintaining a good immune and health status.

Our special training in immunology may help you to maintain an optimum health status. Please contact us if you have ANY ONE of the following health conditions.

- A. If you are above the age of 50 years (higher risk due to age), OR
- B. If you are under the age of 50, the following medical conditions would benefit from an updated evaluation.
 - 1. **Current asthma symptoms**
 - 2. **Emphysema** (COPD) or other chronic lung condition.
 - 3. Frequent (4 or more) **infections**, including sinus infections during the last 2 years, other than simple colds.
 - 4. Two or more episodes of **pneumonia** in the last 3 years
 - 5. **Comorbid conditions** like obesity, diabetes, high blood pressure, high cholesterol or heart disease.

We encourage you to make an appointment with your nearest Columbia Allergy provider to take advantage of this service. We also encourage our patients with comorbid conditions to contact their primary care physician to ensure your plan for these conditions are up to date. Keeping every patient safe and healthy during this pandemic is a team approach and requires cooperation from your providers, and you the patient.



**COVID-19
VACCINE
ALLERGY
TESTING &
TREATMENT**

The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 Vaccines have been making news as a few patients have reported anaphylactic reactions to the vaccinations. Our allergy experts at Columbia Allergy are here to help!

If you have a suspected allergy to polyethylene glycol, we recommend that allergy testing is performed in our office before receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. If you are found to have a true allergy to polyethylene glycol, our specialists at Columbia Allergy have a safe and effective protocol for desensitizing your immune system to this substance. The desensitization treatment consists of approximately one six-hour appointment during which you will receive injections of polyethylene glycol, starting with a very small amount and working your way up to the amount you need to tolerate in order to safely receive the COVID-19 vaccine. Once you are successfully desensitized to polyethylene glycol, you are eligible to receive your COVID-19 vaccine within the next 24 hours or so.

**HOW TO
GET
STARTED**

If you have a known or suspected allergy to polyethylene glycol:

1. Make an appointment at your nearest Columbia Allergy location for polyethylene glycol allergy testing.
2. If a true allergy is detected, make an appointment for your polyethylene glycol allergy desensitization (~ 6 hours in length).
3. Make an appointment for your COVID-19 vaccination within the recommended timeline from your provider after desensitization is completed.

***We are not administering COVID-19 vaccines at any of our locations at this time. You will need to coordinate receiving your vaccination with an outside provider.**



COVID VACCINE FAQS

If I am vaccinated, is it possible for me to infect my child or someone else not vaccinated if I come into contact with COVID?

Vaccines work to offer protection against a specific virus by training components of your immune system to fight off the virus to prevent the virus from replicating in your body, should future exposure to the virus occur. It typically takes a few weeks for the body to build up immunity to

the virus after the vaccination has been injected. For this reason, it is important to remember that if a person is exposed to COVID-19 and becomes infected with the virus before the body has developed immunity, they can develop symptoms and pass the virus on to others. The Pfizer BioNTech and Moderna COVID-19 vaccines are both 2-step vaccinations, so it would be best to assume that you still have the potential to contract and spread COVID-19 until both injections have been completed and your body has had enough time after the second injection to develop immunity.

Can any of the COVID vaccine ingredients cause an allergic reaction?

Most allergic reactions to vaccines can be attributed to the preservatives or the vial stoppers that are made with latex. The Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna vaccines do not contain any of these ingredients, so the risk of a reaction is fairly low. These vaccines primarily contain salts and stabilizers in the form of sugars and lipids, which don't cause allergic reactions. However, one of the ingredients does have a polyethylene glycol component, and polyethylene glycol is a polymer that some people can react to, very rarely.

There is currently a contraindication to administration of the vaccine to individuals with a known history of severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) to any component of the vaccine. As mentioned, the ingredients of this vaccine are very unlikely to cause anaphylaxis, but this reaction was noted during the clinical trials. Highly-allergic people or individuals with mast-cell disorders may develop symptoms of a reaction from the stress of the introduction of the vaccine into the body, and not necessarily from a component of the vaccine. If you fall into either category, we recommend you consult with your allergist or immunologist prior to receiving this vaccine.

If someone has an allergic reaction after taking the vaccine, does that render the vaccine useless for them?

If someone has an allergic reaction after taking the COVID vaccine, and prevents them from getting the second injection, the effectiveness of the vaccine could be negatively affected. If you develop an allergic reaction after receiving the vaccine, we recommend that you follow up with an allergist to determine the specific source of your reaction. Depending on the circumstances surrounding your reaction, your allergist can help to determine whether or not adequate immunity was achieved. Theoretically, an allergic reaction does not reduce the efficacy of a vaccine.

For how long will the vaccine remain effective?

At this time, we do not know for how long the COVID-19 vaccine will remain effective. Earlier this month, Moderna provided an update that immunity was still found in all participants 119 days after their first dose and 90 days after their second dose. As updates from the clinical trials are published we will gain a better understanding of what to expect when it comes to how long the vaccine will stay effective. Some factors that can affect the duration for which the vaccine is effective are whether or not both doses of the vaccine were received, how long someone waits between receiving the first and second dose, and whether the virus mutates.

IN THE NEWS

Parents

Can Allergies Cause a Fever?

You might want to think twice before blaming your child's low-grade fever on allergies. Here's what parents need to know.

BUSINESS INSIDER

At least 4 people have had allergic reactions after Pfizer's vaccine, among hundreds of thousands who've been vaccinated. Here's what we know.

Parents

Can Allergies Cause a Sore Throat?

Seasonal allergies come with a runny nose and sneezing, but can they also cause a sore throat?

healthline

When to Introduce Walnuts, Almonds, and Other Nuts to Baby

Dr. Yan Yan weighs in.