POSSIBLE REACTIONS TO ALLERGY INJECTIONS

1. LOCAL REACTIONS

Red, itchy swelling at the site of the injection is not uncommon. It may start immediately after the injection or up to several hours later. Ice, calamine lotion or Benadryl cream will usually bring the swelling down. If the swelling bothers you during your wait in our office, please show it to the doctor, nurse, or allergy tech. If it starts after you leave, write down the position (if you received more than one injection), its size, and how long it lasted. Show this to your doctor on your next visit. This is very important because your next dose will be adjusted depending on the amount of swelling that you report.

2. SYSTEMIC REACTION

Symptoms of allergy, such as rashes (not at the injection site), sneezing, nasal stuffiness, cough or tight chest that may occur after an allergy injection are called systemic reactions. Report them to your doctor or nurse in your office as soon as they occur so you can be given something for the symptoms. If the reactions start shortly after leaving the office, it is best to return immediately, otherwise use your own allergy medication and the symptoms should disappear over the next 24 hours. Then report the symptoms to your doctor or nurse upon your next visit and the dosage will be adjusted. Be aware that reactions may start within six hours after an injection(s).

**WARNING - BETA BLOCKER MEDICATIONS**

IF YOU ARE TAKING BETA BLOCKER MEDICATION IN ANY FORM YOU CANNOT BE TESTED FOR ALLERGIES, NOR CAN YOU RECEIVE TREATMENT FOR THEM. Beta Blockers can cause systemic reactions to allergy injections. Beta Blocker medications include: Propranolol (Inderal), Metaproplol (Lopressor), Nadol (Cargard), Timolol (Blocadren), Timolide, and Timoptic Eye Drops. These medications are often used for heart disorders, hypertension, migraine headaches and glaucoma. If the medication can be changed to a non-Beta Blocker class (only under supervision of the prescribing doctor), we may proceed with allergy testing and injections.
Tobacco is an irritant as well as an allergen. People who have allergies should not smoke and should avoid people who do. Rugs, curtains, and upholstered furniture hold smoke particles; therefore, there should be no smoking in the home.

The final group of allergens that are of tremendous importance in many allergic problems are the mold spores. Mold or fungi are present in all plants, in the soil and in our homes. Molds grow under the refrigerator, the sinks, the dishwasher, washing machine, behind the toilet and on the shower door and curtains. A damp basement is also a great place for mold growth. A "Zephiran" solution can be used to wash or spray these areas to inhibit mold formation. The solution can be made with one ounce of 17% Zephiran added to one gallon of distilled water.

Every method of treatment is aimed at producing an allergic equilibrium or balance, but other factors play a part in disturbing the equilibrium adding additional burdens that will allow an allergic attack to develop. The most common contributions to such a destruction of balance are: infections, fatigue, emotional excitement, over-exertion and dramatic temperature changes. These factors must also be taken into consideration.
UNDERSTANDING YOUR ALLERGIES

You have been SET (skin)/RAST (blood) tested and have shown a positive reaction to allergens. Not only has it been determined which of the airborne factors are causative in our problem, but your specific degree of sensitivity has been diagnosed. Your treatment will begin with injections once a week, then you will be maintained with injections on an individual basis. After approximately one year, your treatment schedule will be adjusted to your specific needs.

**IMPORTANT! PLEASE NOTE **

You have received a series of intradermal skin test and will soon receive an injection or multiple injections for treatment. You may develop reactions following either the test or treatment. These reactions are rare and can be easily treated. The local reactions you may experience on your arm may be: itching, swelling, redness or warmth to the touch. If this occurs, you can use Benadryl ointment or spray, or take a 25mg Benadryl tablet every 4-6 hours. You can also apply ice to the area. Please call us if the symptoms persist. Generalized reactions may be chest tightness, shortness of breath or wheezing. If you have any of these symptoms, please call our office immediately.
If you should feel ill or have a fever on the day you are scheduled for an injection, please call and discuss this with our office.

GENERAL ALLERGY INFORMATION

The substances which are capable of producing allergic reactions are called allergens. When a particular allergen is absorbed by the body, the minute cells in the tissues manufacture a special substance called antibodies, which interact with it. Chemicals may be released that produce irritation in the susceptible tissues; for example, the nose, the bronchial tubes and the skin. The range and variety of things to which a susceptible person may become sensitive are almost endless. Sensitivity usually occurs only after repeated exposure to the substance. Allergic patients may be sensitive to more than one allergen. The tendency to become sensitive or allergic to some foreign substance is usually inherited. It is peculiarities of the constitution just as the coloring of your eyes. It also appears that what one will become sensitive to depends in part upon the amount of exposure to any foreign substance or allergen. Thus, and individual who has inherited tendency to become sensitive to foreign substances may become sensitive to cow's milk shortly after birth, and then may become sensitive to dog hair at the age of six after acquiring a dog and then, throughout his life, may develop new sensitivities as his new environment subjects him to new exposures. The previous sensitivities may remain or be lost.

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There are three basic methods of treating allergies:

1) Removal of allergens from the environment
2) The use of antihistamines, to control symptoms
3) Injection of small amounts of antigen given weekly as an attempt to build up resistance to allergens.

The elimination of the offending allergen from the environment is the best method of treatment. This treatment is attempted in many ways, some of which will be discussed later. The second method, the use of medication, often causes drowsiness or other unwanted effects. Antihistamines often lose their effectiveness with continued use. The third method, referred to as desensitization by injection, is necessary when the offending allergen cannot be totally eliminated. This type of treatment is utilized when the sensitivity is to allergens such as grass, ragweed, tree pollen and dust.

One of the most important allergens to be controlled is a substance called house dust. It is a complex conglomeration of microscopic particles in our homes and buildings, resulting primarily from rugs, drapes, upholstered furniture, bedding, etc. There are two ways that you can significantly decrease this allergen. First, remove all feather and feather containing articles completely from your home. Remember that a down quilt or comforter is made of feathers. Be sure sleeping bags, blankets, and bedspreads are nylon, Dacron, polyester or any other synthetic material. Second, blankets should be washed every 4-6 weeks and pillows replaced every year. If your foam pillow shows evidence of flaking, discard it. The flaking may be due to mold growth in the pillow and it should not be used. Waxed wooden floors are the best production against house dust in the bedroom. There should not be any shag rugs in the house since they hold the most dust particles. Rug pads should be pure foam rubber pads, not fiber, felt or hair. "Allergex", a house dust control product, can be sprayed on rugs, walls, curtains and bedsprads for dust immobilization, but this treatment should not be a substitute for cleaning and removing dust from the home.

For those of you who share your home with pets, special work is needed. Pets, especially dog, cats and birds all have a peculiarly ability to prevent recovery from allergic problems, without appearing to be a significant part of the problem. Equally important is the fact that adequate treatment cannot be achieved against them as long as they are permitted to be in your home, basement or family automobile. Your injection(s) will be more beneficial if you are not in constant contact with the pest. There is no significant difference between species of dogs and the length of their hair as far as allergenicity is concerned. Do not be deceived by; magazines articles or dog breeders in this respect.

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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Now that I have finished testing, what happens?
   A customized, individual serum will be prepared for you, if you should decide
to start immunotherapy (allergy injections).

2. When will the serum be ready for me?
   Your serum will be ready in approximately 1-2 weeks after your testing.

3. How often will I be taking the injections?
   A schedule will be prepared for your individual need. This schedule will be
based upon each individual's reaction to the serum. If you follow your
suggested schedule closely, you will find that your shots will give you more
relief.

4. What is the schedule for allergy injections?
   This varies between individuals. They can be taken as frequently as every
week and up to once a month. However, the schedule will be determined
upon each person's need.

5. When do I see the Doctor again?
   The doctor routinely sees her patients following testing. The doctor will go
over your results and answer and questions you may have. After finishing
each vial (approximately three months), there will be another appointment
with the doctor as well.

6. What if there is no relief from the injections or they produce more symptoms?
   Your body's chemistry is constantly changing and some people require an
appropriate adjustment of their neutralizing dose from time to time. After your
neutralizing does is established and you are placed on maintenance
treatment, changes are less frequently and additional testing will be
performed as needed.

7. What is the neutralizing dose?
   A neutralizing dose is the amount of serum to counteract your allergy
symptoms.

8. What symptoms can be caused by the allergy serum?
   You may experience the same kind of symptoms that brought you to our
office, such as stuffy nose, sneezing, running/itchy nose, swollen/teary eyes.
You may experience some swelling and redness of the arms at the injection
site, as well.

9. Will the allergy serum interfere with other medications that I am taking?
   No, but if you have any questions please contact us or your family doctor.
10. How long am I suppose to continue taking the allergy shots?
   It is impossible to determine how long an individual will have to keep taking the injections. Each person’s progress must be evaluated on an individual basis. However, the minimal amount of time is usually two years.

11. What should I do if I develop an illness that is not directly related to my allergies?
   This office will take care of any allergy related difficulties along with ears, nose and throat problems. You need a family physician to take care of infections and other illnesses that are not allergy related. For this reason, always maintain contact with your family doctor and your child’s pediatrician.

12. Can I take my serum out of this office?
   For those who must take their allergy serum to another facility the following instructions apply:
   a) Please check with your family doctor or pediatrician to make sure they are able to give you your injection(s). You will need to have a Physician’s Release form signed by your doctor before we release the vials. This form can be obtained from your allergy tech.
   b) The first injection(s) of serum from a new vial MUST be given in our office before you can take it elsewhere.

13. Does the allergy serum have to be refrigerated?
   Yes, if the serum is not refrigerated, it will lose its effectiveness to supply relief. However, it can be taken out 30 minutes before your injection to eliminate any discomfort.

14. What is the life span of a bottle of allergy serum?
   Three months.

15. What happens if I run out of allergy serum?
   For those who take their serum to another office, we ask that when you are down to a one-week supply to contact our office so that new serum can be made. You must receive your first injections from your new serum at our office.

***PLEASE NOTE!!!***

For the benefit of all concerned, please refrain from wearing any perfume or cologne to the office when receiving your allergy injections. These chemicals are very irritating to those who have allergies.

Thank you!

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