

Richmond Allergy and Asthma Specialists, P.C.

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STARTING IMMUNOTHERAPY

1. Strength of Vaccine and Increasing Dose:
 - Vaccine is started at a very low dose and low concentration.
 - Every time you receive an injection, the amount of allergen you receive increases unless you've had a reaction to the injection or there has been an extended time between shots. I will go over reactions in a moment.
 - This is the "build-up" phase.
 - What you are building up to is a maintenance dose. This is the highest dose and concentration that YOU can tolerate. We do have a goal concentration and dose that we are working up to. If you reach it, good. If you don't, we'll maintain you at the highest that you can tolerate.

2. Frequency of Injections:
 - While on build-up: You are encouraged to get the shots twice a week (every 3-4 days). At this rate of time, maintenance can ideally be reached in 3-4 months. You can still build-up every 14 days before the dose will be adjusted for time. Keep in mind, the faster you get to maintenance, the more benefit you will receive from the shots.
 - Maintenance: Once you reach maintenance you can back off to once every 1-2 weeks. If your symptoms start reoccurring before you next shot, that's your hint that you need your shots more frequently.
 - If you go 4 weeks or more between injections, call before coming in or going to get your injection. An adjustment will have to be made.
 - Continue your medications prescribed by the Dr. until he discontinues it.

4. Duration of Immunotherapy:
 - Injections are usually continued for at least 4 to 5 years once maintenance has been reached.
 - It can take up to a year or even longer before you experience the benefits of the shots.

5. When to:
 - Receive injections:
 - Must be at least 2 full days (72 hours) between injections.
 - Monday & Thursday
 - Tuesday & Friday
 - Monday & Friday
 - Do not exercise for 2 hours following your shot.

- Withhold injections:
 - Fever above 100.5°. Must be fever free for 24 hours.
 - Severe wheezing
 - Poison Ivy – contact our office for further instructions
 - Chicken pox/Shingles – contact our office for further instructions
 - Mononucleosis – contact our office for further instructions
 - Pregnancy – contact our office for further instructions

6. Signs & Symptoms of Reactions and Treatment:

- Local: (area that shot was given)
 - Redness, itching, swelling, and tenderness at the injection site within 2 hours of injection.
 - Treatment: Apply OTC hydrocortisone cream or Benadryl cream. Ice pack can also be applied indirectly to site for no more than 20 minutes intervals.
 - For reactions lasting more than 6 hours, make note of size (dime, nickel, quarter, etc.) and how long the reaction lasts. Tell the nurse prior to your next injection. The dose will need to be adjusted.
- Systemic: (your whole system/body)
 - Hives, swelling or itching
 - Shortness of breath or chest/throat tightness
 - Coughing or wheezing
 - Cramps, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea
 - Usually happens within the first 20 minutes of the shot. Make sure you wait 20 minutes after EVERY shot in the doctor's office.
 - Treatment: Not in office: Epipen (demo epipen)
 - ✓ Epipen must be kept at room temperature. Do not leave in a hot car.
 - ✓ Keep the 2 together. Do not separate. If not better in 15 minutes, the second one is to be used.
 - ✓ Carry with you for 6 hours after your injection.

7. Where will you be receiving shots?

- Outside Medical Facility: Contact them to see if they have certain hours/days they give allergy shots.
- We will be mailing the first set of vials (box) & record sheets to your home address. Make sure to refrigerate after receiving. Can be un-refrigerated for up to 7 days. DO NOT FREEZE.
- Here: Make sure to read closing notices. Posted at least 1 month in advanced.