

Sublingual Allergy Drops Information

Sublingual allergy drops are a form immunotherapy. Your drops are designed to treat the cause of your allergies by increasing your tolerance to them. If allergy symptoms are not well controlled with environmental avoidance measures or medications your doctor may recommend customized allergy shots to reduce and control your symptoms.

How Do Allergy Drops Work?

Patients will receive allergy drops made especially for them with allergens based on their allergy test results and health history. These may include environmental allergens such as pollens, dust mites, cats, dogs. Molds will occasionally be used, but will need to be in their own vials because they can decrease how effective pollen allergen extracts are if they are in the same vial. Allergy drops do NOT include foods.

A gradual increase in tolerance to allergens occurs and more improvement occurs over time. You should notice fewer flares of symptoms and many patients have less need for their allergy medications.

Allergy drops are not currently approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). They are often used abroad in Europe for treatment of environmental allergies. The allergen extracts are FDA approved for administration by injection.

Allergy drops can be taken at home after the first initial treatment is completed in the doctor's office because the risk of a serious allergic reaction is lower than with allergy shots. Less time at the doctor's office = more time enjoying less allergy symptoms.

Patients will have a **personalized one-on-one allergy nurse visit** to review exactly how to take their allergy drops, review any questions or concerns, and take their first dose. They will leave the office with their vials, ready to continue their therapy at home.

Length of Treatment

Immunotherapy usually takes 3 to 5 years. Stopping treatment earlier may result in symptoms returning. The duration of benefit varies after allergy drops are stopped. In some people, improvement lasts forever. For others, mild symptoms may return but can be controlled with medications. For a few people, symptoms get worse, and more allergy immunotherapy is needed.

Possible Reactions to Allergy Drops

Because allergy drops contain the allergens a patient is allergic to, they can sometimes cause reactions. Most of the time, a mild reaction occurs within 2 hours. Severe reactions usually begin within minutes of taking the drops.

- **Local allergic reaction:** Mouth itching, mild local tongue and/or lip swelling. These can often be treated with oral antihistamines like Zyrtec, Allegra, Xyzal, Claritin, or Benadryl.

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- **Systemic allergic reaction:** Rarely, a serious systemic reaction can occur. Symptoms may include itching, hives, nasal congestion, sneezing, coughing, wheezing, possible chest tightness, and/or asthma, among others. In rare cases, reactions can be life-threatening. Serious systemic reactions can occur in people with poorly controlled asthma. Factors that can make severe reactions more likely are intense exposure to pollen during a pollen season and exercising within 2 hours of our drops.

Quick Facts

- You will be required to have a prescribed up-to-date autoinjector epinephrine (EpiPen or AuviQ) and oral antihistamine available every day when you take your drops.
- Your prescription vials should be kept refrigerated. Avoid extreme heat or freezing of the vials. Vials expire after 60 days at room temperature and after 1 year if consistently refrigerated.
- Do not participate in strenuous activities 30 minutes before and 2 hours after your allergy drops.
- Do not take your allergy drops if you are having a severe episode of hay fever or asthma without first checking with your doctor, have a bad respiratory infection with a fever over 100.4 degrees F, or have used your albuterol in the past 24 hours (other than as scheduled before activity).
- Do not take your drops on days of dental procedures or if you have any open mouth sores or wounds.
- For women of childbearing age, notify our office if you become pregnant. Allergy immunotherapy **should not be started or escalated during pregnancy.**
- **Oral beta blockers cannot be taken while on allergy immunotherapy.** Emergency treatment with epinephrine can be less effective when patients are on beta blockers. Let the staff know if you have been diagnosed with a new medical condition or are taking any new medications.
- **Call the allergy department to order your next set of vials when you get ready to start your last vial so your vials are ready for pick up before you run out of your current vials.**
- If you want your allergy vials to be shipped to you, you will be required to pay the costs of overnight shipping.
- If you have any questions about these instructions or your allergy symptoms, please talk to your doctor.

Cost of Allergy Drops

Because allergy drops are not FDA approved, they are not covered by health insurance and are an out-of-pocket cost. Payment will be collected prior to vials being mixed.

- **Build-up = \$450**
 - 3-month supply = 2 escalation vials, 2 maintenance vials, and an initial personalized nurse visit
- **Maintenance refill = \$375**
 - 3-month supply = 3 maintenance vials (~\$1500/year)

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