

What do I need to consider before treatment?

You must inform your healthcare professional if:

- You are allergic to aluminium hydroxide gel, phenol, or sodium chloride. These are the ingredients that the allergens are suspended in to make up the vaccine.
- You are using β -blocker medication. This could include medication for heart disease, blood pressure or anxiety.
- You may be pregnant or are breastfeeding.
- You have any autoimmune disease, immunodeficiency or malignant disease.

What do I need to be aware of before each injection?

You must inform your allergy healthcare professional if:

- You suffered any side effect from the last injection.
- You have asthma exacerbation within 3 days before your injection.
- You have a fever over 38.5°C.
- Your usual medication has changed or you are using a new drug. This includes medicines obtained without a prescription.

What must I do on the day of my injection?

- You must remain under observation at the clinic for at least 30 minutes in case you develop any generalised allergy symptoms.
- You must avoid excessive alcohol intake.
- Do not rub injection area or apply heat to it.
- Avoid contact with the agents causing your allergy as much as possible.
- Do not perform intense physical exercise.
- Avoid very hot baths or showers and saunas.

Healthcare Professional's details:

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Allergoid Immunotherapy Vaccines

Information for Patients



You have been given this leaflet because your healthcare professional has chosen subcutaneous immunotherapy as a suitable treatment option for you.

What is subcutaneous immunotherapy?

Subcutaneous immunotherapy vaccines have been developed to reduce allergic symptoms caused by agents you are sensitised to. They are given by injection.

The active agents in the immunotherapy vaccines are called allergens. Allergens are the substances your body is allergic to and which triggers your immune system to react in a way that causes your allergy symptoms. These allergens are extracted and made into an injectable vaccine.

These vaccines belong to a new class of immunotherapy products called allergoids. Scientific studies have shown that allergoids can present less risk of side effects than traditional native immunotherapy vaccines. This means that there may be less risk of you experiencing serious side effects from allergoid immunotherapy.

What are allergoids?

Allergoids contain suspensions of one or more of the specific allergens you are allergic to. The purpose of the vaccine is to stimulate an immune response to the allergens and build up your tolerance to the allergen, so that the allergic symptoms you currently experience are significantly reduced.



With conventional vaccines, some allergens digest the other allergens so there is only one allergen present when the injection is given. Because of this, multiple injections need to be given at one appointment. Another benefit of allergoids is that allergens can be mixed across the groups. For example, dog and grass pollen can be mixed with dustmite allergens and is given as one injection.

There are three presentations of allergoids:

1. Initial course of 4 injections over 21 days followed by monthly maintenance injections. Mixing dilutes potency (i.e. 2 allergens = 50% potency of each).
2. Same as previous but with shorter up dosing.
Conventional: Initial course of 2 injections over 7 days followed by monthly maintenance injections.
Rush: Initial course of 2 injections 30 minutes apart followed by monthly maintenance injections.
3. Initial course of 2 injections 30 minutes apart followed by monthly maintenance injections. Mixing does not dilute potency (i.e. all allergens at 100% potency).

Immunotherapy can involve the risk of generalised reactions which can sometimes be severe (for example hives, asthma, anaphylactic shock) which is why the vaccine must always be administered under medical supervision and in appropriately equipped medical centres.

Your healthcare professional can discuss this further with you.

How is the treatment given?

The vaccine will be given subcutaneously with a needle i.e. it is injected in the arm just under the skin.

In the beginning, injections are given a few days apart or on the same day. During this time, the dose will be gradually increased. This is called the initial course. Once the maximum dose is reached, you will have subsequent injections every four weeks for the next 3 years (in some cases 5 years). This is called the maintenance course.

Your specific dosing regimen will be prescribed by your healthcare professional and is based on your reactions and history, so the frequency may vary from the regime discussed above.

It is important that you keep to the injection schedule your healthcare professional provides you. If there is too long between injections, you may have to step back in your doses or start again altogether.

After a discussion with your healthcare professional, treatment can be discontinued at any time before the full program is completed. However the long term benefits of the immunotherapy will be reduced.

What are the possible side effects?

Like all medicines, these vaccines can cause side effects.

- Local reactions: common (affects 1-10 patients per 100); redness, pain and/or swelling at the injection site. Usually appears within 30 minutes but can take up to 72 hours.
- Moderate systemic reactions: uncommon (affects 1-10 patients per 1,000); ocular-nasal irritation, sneezing, hives (skin rash) and angioedema which appears within 15 minutes to up until 4-6 hours after the injection.
- Severe systemic reactions: very rare (affects <1 patient per 10,000); asthma within 30 minutes of injection, hives (skin rash)/angioedema that appears 5-10 minutes after injection, anaphylactic shock.