



## Recommendations to keep Allergy Shots Safe

Allergy shots are small amounts of the substance (allergen) which your test identified. The concentration of the allergen is slowly increased to develop a tolerance (or lack of reaction) to the material. Care must be taken to avoid an allergic reaction while developing this tolerance. We ask you to follow our guidelines.

1. **Keep all appointments for shots.** To be effective, allergy shots must be given at regular, short intervals. We understand that it is challenging to make all of your appointments, but, if you need to miss an appointment, please call your allergy nurse in advance. Delaying your scheduled shot by even 2-3 weeks may increase the risk of severe reaction at the time of the next shot. For your safety, we will reduce the dose of the next injection, but this will prolong the therapy. If a patient waits more than 6 months between allergy shots, new testing will be needed to re-establish a safe dose for the next shot.
2. **Stay in the allergy office for 30 minutes** after each injection. This is to make sure that immediate attention is available if you have an early reaction to your allergy shot. At the time of each visit, before receiving the next shot, tell the allergy nurse or doctor how your body reacted to the last one. It may be easiest to describe the size of the skin reaction in terms of a dime, nickel, quarter or half dollar coin.

*Mild signs of an allergic reaction* might be reddening, swelling or itching at the injection site, runny, tickly nose, itchy, watery eyes, fatigue or tickling in the back of your throat. These should usually resolve without treatment, but 1.) apply 1% Hydrocortisone or other anti-itch cream (you can buy these creams without a prescription) to an inflamed injection site, 2.) apply a cool washcloth to the site, or 3.) you can take an antihistamine, such as Benadryl, Claritin, Zyrtec, Allegra or Clarinex. If you want to minimize any minor reaction you may take an antihistamine before your allergy shot.

More **serious** reactions would be:

- ❖ **shortness of breath** or **difficulty breathing**
- ❖ **swelling** of your tongue

If you notice one or more of these serious reactions after you have left the allergy office, go

- ❖ immediately to the **closest Emergency Room** or **call 911**.



3. BEFORE RECEIVING AN ALLERGY SHOT, alert our office nurse
  - ❖ about any changes in your medicine
  - ❖ any changes in your general health, particularly if you are **pregnant** or have new breathing difficulties
  - ❖ the following conditions or vaccines will delay your next allergy shot

no delay	<b>chickenpox vaccine</b>
24 hour delay	<b>flu shot, pneumonia vaccine shot:</b>
48 hour delay	<b>tetanus shot, fever</b>
one week	<b>TB shot, hepatitis vaccine, any rash, poison ivy, cold, asthma attack</b>
one month	<b>Lyme disease shot, rabies vaccine shot</b>
4. Avoid physical activity for several hours before and 24 hours after every injection.
5. Avoid drinking alcohol or large meals before and after every injection.
6. Avoid or limit contact with the substances which cause your allergies.

*I have read and understand these recommendations.* \_\_\_\_\_ *date*