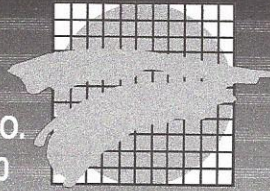


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# ALLERGY DIAGNOSTIC

## WELCOME TO ALLERGY DIAGNOSTICS

### What is an Allergy?

An allergy is an abnormal or increased sensitivity to something that normally shouldn't cause any reaction. The substance you are reacting to is called an allergen. In most people, the

body's immune system recognizes allergens as harmless, and deals with them without you even being aware of them. In the allergic person the immune system malfunctions and

"over reacts" to the allergen as if it were dangerous to the body. That reaction results in the symptoms we associate with allergies including hay fever, hives, eczema and asthma.

## ALLERGY SYMPTOMS & COMMON ALLERGENS

### Allergy Symptoms

- Sneezing
- Watery/itchy eyes
- Nasal Congestion
- Clear, runny nose
- Post nasal drip
- Sore throat
- Throat clearing
- Cold symptoms that won't go away
- Headaches
- Persistent cough
- Wheezing, chest tightness, shortness of breath
- Recurring ear and sinus infections
- Fatigue

### Common Allergens

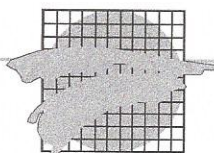
- Tree pollens
- Weed pollens & Ragweed
- Grass pollens
- Foods - especially: milk, eggs, wheat, peanuts & tree nuts
- Dust mites
- Molds
- Cats & Dogs
- Insect stings & bites

### Case History

On your first visit you will be asked to fill out a questionnaire. This information is very important in helping us diagnose and treat your

allergy symptoms. An accurate record of how and when your symptoms occur is vital not only for your first visit but on an ongoing basis. You should always

feel free to call our office if your symptoms increase, if you do not understand how to take your medication, or have a reaction to your medication or treatment.



## DIAGNOSIS

### Prick Testing

In addition to taking a case history, the doctors may perform a screening allergy skin test called a Prick Test to determine if allergen specific antibody (IgE) is present. IgE is the antibody produced when an allergic person is exposed to an allergen. The amount of IgE is rated on a scale of 0 to 4, 0 being a negative response, 4 being the highest reaction.

### Intradermal Skin Testing

Should any of your Prick Testing results come back negative or questionable based on your case history, the doctor may perform what is called an

intradermal skin test. A small amount of the allergen is placed under the skin. A positive reaction will result in a bump similar to a mosquito bite. (Should you experience itching and swelling after your office visit, place ice on the area or use Benadryl or steroid cream. If the symptoms persist over 48 hours please call the office.)

*Note: Wear a short sleeve shirt or anything that can be rolled up to your shoulder. This will be one of your longer visits. Please plan on spending 2 hours with us.*

Do Not Take Any Antihistamines For One Week Before Your Scheduled Skin Test. You may use Pseudoephedrine (Sudafed).

Common Antihistamines:

Alavert	Drixoral
Alka-Seltzer Plus	NyQuil
Allegra	Sudafed Plus
Benadryl	Robitussin
Chlor-Trimeton	Tylenol Sinus
Claritin	Vicks
Contac	Zyrtec
Dimatapp	

If you think that a medication which you are taking may contain an antihistamine, call our office or ask your pharmacist.

## ALLERGY TREATMENT IMMUNOTHERAPY

Most patients choose immunotherapy as means for treating their allergies. Immunotherapy consists of weekly injections of small doses of the allergens to which you are allergic. The doses are small enough that you do not have an allergic reaction yet large enough that your body's immune system begins to recognize it. Slowly the amounts of allergen are increased, until the allergen, in its natural state, no longer causes a severe reaction. Shots are given weekly until the highest tolerated dose is reached and symptoms are controlled. At this point, maintenance treatment begins with shots every 2 weeks.

### How long will you need treatment?

Every patient is different. You can help the process by being faithful in getting your injections. Immunotherapy is generally continued for 5 years.

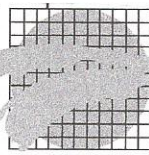
**How long until I feel better?** Again, every patient is different but patients may feel better after one or two months of immunotherapy. In the meantime the doctor can prescribe medication that will provide temporary relief from your symptoms. It may take up to a year for improvement to occur with immunotherapy.

### What if I miss my shots?

Many patients experience a return of their symptoms. In addition, missing shots slows down the desensitization process.

### Epipen

Before you receive your first shot you will be given a prescription for an epipen. Have it filled at your local pharmacy and bring it with you every time you get your shot. The doctor will instruct you on its use. This is an emergency kit used only if you have a severe reaction to your injection.



Your Epipen is to be used, if after a shot, you experience difficulty in breathing, hives, immediate severe sneezing, coughing, or itching or swelling of body parts (other than shot site – ie the arm area in which the injection was given).

If such a reaction occurs, use your Epipen and go immediately to the nearest medical facility. Upon arrival call Allergy Diagnostic. (216) 831-4930.

### **Bottle Test**

You will need a new vial every 10 weeks initially, and then every 20 weeks while on maintenance treatment. The bottle test, a skin test, allows the physician to determine if your immune system can handle the increased potency of your new vial.

### **Billing**

We bill your insurance company first. Most policies cover 80% of

the cost of diagnosis and treatment. If you have a question about your particular plan consult your personnel director, insurance company itself, or ask our staff to help.

We accept Medicare, Medicaid, and assignment. We are happy to explain all cost and procedures; should you not understand a bill, we encourage you to call.

## Questions & Answers

**Q** Who administers the shots?

**A** The shots are generally administered by a doctor or nurse. Even if a nurse actually gives you the shots, a doctor is always nearby to assist you in the event that you react to the shots.

**Q** React in what way?

**A** The most common side effect of allergy shots is swelling, redness or itching at the site of the injection. An oral antihistamine or aspirin usually relieves this minor discomfort. In other instances, the whole arm may swell. The most

serious side effect, however, is anaphylaxis, which must be treated with a shot of epinephrine.

Fortunately, such extreme reactions are rare, and the risk of fatality from immunotherapy is rarer still (approx. one death per 2.5 million injections). Still, because the possibility of anaphylaxis exists, it is important that shots be administered only in a physician's office, where facilities and trained personnel are available to treat it. This is also why most doctors ask you to wait in the office for 20 or 30 minutes after you have received your shot. Most severe reactions to allergy shots occur during this time.

**Q** How will I know if immunotherapy is the right choice for me?

**A** That's a decision you will have to make for yourself – after consulting with your doctor. Generally, the people who benefit most from immunotherapy are those who have a demonstrated allergy (confirmed by skin testing) to a substance for which allergen extracts are available; who experience allergy symptoms for at least several months of the year; who are unable to attain relief from those symptoms through medication or lifestyle changes; or who experience side effects from the medications used to treat their allergies.