



WHAT REACTIONS CAN I HAVE WITH ALLERGY SHOTS?

The techniques we use for testing for the presence and degree of sensitivity to an allergen, and the way in which dosage is advanced, makes a reaction to an allergy injection unlikely. However, this information is furnished to make your treatment even safer. Please read it carefully, call us if you have questions and keep this sheet where it can be easily found if you need it.

To treat a possible reaction, you will need an antihistamine and epinephrine. Any antihistamine, either prescription or over-the-counter, will do. Examples are Allegra, Zyrtec, Claritin, Chlor-Trimeton, and Benadryl. Epinephrine is available in an automatic injection form called Twinject, Epi-pen, Epi-pen Jr. You will receive a prescription to purchase one of these. It is unlikely that you will ever need it, but it must be available when you receive your allergy shot. Don't forget to check the expiration date from time to time.

The combination of an allergy shot with higher-than-usual allergen exposure may sometimes result in a local reaction, which is an area of firmness (not necessarily redness) at the injection site larger than a 25-cent piece compared to a quarter (25mm) persisting for a least 24 hours. Redness and/or firmness can also be caused by a complication infection, or by a reaction to glycerine in the mixture. If a local reaction around an injection site occurs, take an antihistamine and report this to the nurse before you next injection, for dosage adjustment if necessary.

A true severe reaction must be treated immediately. It begins within 5 or 10 minutes of the injection with intense itching of the throat, nose, and chest membranes. If this occurs, take an antihistamine immediately. If the reaction progresses to any swelling of the face or throat, difficulty swallowing or breathing, and generalized itching or redness of the body accompanied by a feeling of distress, immediately administer one dose of epinephrine, injecting into the soft tissue of the arm opposite the site of your allergy shot. Put a tourniquet (e.g., a belt) above the place where you had allergy shot to slow the absorption of the material into the system. If it is necessary to administer epinephrine, go immediately to the nearest hospital emergency room or urgent care center, where you can receive medical attention while the doctor is being notified.