

LEARN MORE ABOUT REALLY TREATING YOUR ALLERGIES!



Your doctor has prescribed you or has spoken to you about Allergy Immunotherapy (AIT).

This booklet will help you to better understand the principles behind AIT: how it works, how to manage it, and why it is important to carefully adhere to your prescribed regimen.

Please read this booklet carefully and don't hesitate to seek medical advice from your doctor or pharmacist!



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Life beyond allergy

WHAT IS ALLERGY IMMUNOTHERAPY?

- Allergy Immunotherapy (AIT) is one of the treatment options in the management of respiratory allergies.
- AIT consists of gradually exposing you to increasing amounts of your triggering allergen until your immune system naturally builds tolerance to that allergen.
- The efficacy and safety of AIT has been demonstrated in numerous clinical studies.

DID YOU KNOW

Allergy immunotherapy is administered over a period of **3 to 5 years** (or seasons, as may be the case for seasonal allergies*), and **is proven to reduce respiratory allergy symptoms.**

HOW DOES ALLERGY IMMUNOTHERAPY WORK?

- AIT helps you to build tolerance to your triggering allergen by **rebalancing your immune system.**
- This 'rebalancing' of your immune response ultimately reduces the symptoms you experience when you are exposed to the triggering allergen even after you stop taking AIT!

* If you have seasonal allergies, then your doctor may recommend you to take your allergy immunotherapy treatment for part of the year: a few months before and then during the pollen season. This dosing schedule is then repeated seasonally, according to your doctor's instructions.

WHAT DISTINGUISHES ALLERGY IMMUNOTHERAPY FROM OTHER TREATMENT OPTIONS?

- **Typical allergy treatments, such as nasal sprays and eye drops, are known as symptomatic treatments** because they work by temporarily alleviating some of your allergy symptoms (e.g. stuffy nose, itchy eyes), however they do not treat the underlying cause of your allergic disease.
- **Allergy immunotherapy is different because it addresses the underlying cause of your allergies.**

WHAT BENEFITS CAN YOU EXPECT FROM ALLERGY IMMUNOTHERAPY?

• **SHORT-TERM:**

- **Improvement** in your allergy symptoms.¹
- **Reduction** in the use of symptomatic medications.²

• **LONG-TERM:**

- **Long-lasting persistent effect** on your allergy symptoms.^{1,2}
- May **reduce the risk** of developing asthma and new allergies.²



Like with all medicines, AIT may not work in every patient and it is important to seek medical advice if you do not feel you are getting the expected benefit after the time indicated by your doctor or if you experience any side effects.

HOW IS ALLERGY IMMUNOTHERAPY ADMINISTERED?

- AIT is based on **extracts of natural allergens**, such as pollens or house dust mites. AIT can be administered as subcutaneous injections or by sublingual drops or tablets.

Subcutaneous immunotherapy (SCIT) 	Sublingual immunotherapy (SLIT) 
Also known as 'allergy shots'.	Drops or tablet formats available.
Injections under the skin.	Placed under the tongue.
All doses given in a doctor's office where the patient must remain under medical supervision for 30 minutes after the injection.	First dose is taken in a doctor's office and subsequent doses are self-administered at home.
Treatment usually involves a build-up phase (increasing allergen doses) and a maintenance dose in which the extract is administered with a 4-6 weeks interval.	Most often taken daily or in some cases every other day according to the specific treatment regimen prescribed by your doctor.

- The principle of allergy immunotherapy is the same for both routes of administration – small doses of allergen are given on a continuous or discontinuous (seasonal*) schedule for 3 to 5 years in order to build up your tolerance.

It is up to your allergy specialist and you to discuss what is the preferred form of treatment administration.

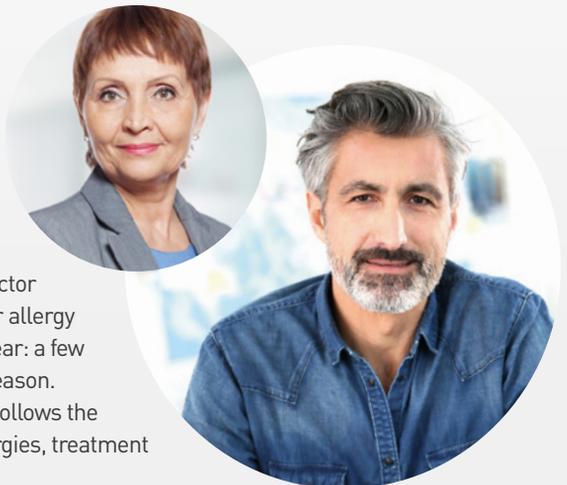
The following factors should all be considered in this decision:

- If you have other concomitant medical conditions (e.g. asthma) or take any other medicines
- Your personal preferences and lifestyle



YOUR COMMITMENT TO ALLERGY IMMUNOTHERAPY IS CRITICAL FOR ITS SUCCESS.

- For AIT to be effective the **treatment regimen prescribed by your doctor must be closely adhered to**, whether you are experiencing symptoms or not.
- The length of time your doctor prescribes you AIT every year may vary according to the type of allergy you have (e.g. seasonal or perennial)*.
- It is important to continue taking your AIT treatment even when your symptoms have begun to improve.
- A typical AIT treatment course usually lasts for 3 to 5 years with treatment benefits assessed regularly by your doctor each year or season.
- Any decision to stop AIT should be discussed with your allergy specialist.
- **Above all, if you have questions, ASK YOUR DOCTOR!**



*If you have seasonal allergies, then your doctor may recommend you only need to take your allergy immunotherapy treatment for part of the year: a few months before and then during the pollen season. Treatment resumes the following year and follows the same protocol. In the case of perennial allergies, treatment is to be taken all year long.

WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE SIDE EFFECTS OF ALLERGY IMMUNOTHERAPY?

- Like with all medicines, allergy immunotherapy can cause side effects, though not all patients experience them.
- Side effects may occur at the beginning of therapy or during treatment.
- Please refer to the patient information leaflet provided with your AIT for more specific information about your treatment.

Subcutaneous immunotherapy (SCIT)



Given in clinics with experience in AIT.

Sublingual immunotherapy (SLIT)



May be self-administered at home. First intake under physician supervision.

Side effects

(as stated by the European Academy of Allergy and Clinical Immunology)

There are significant risks associated with the use of injection immunotherapy including the rare occurrence of systemic adverse reactions and anaphylaxis requiring the use of adrenaline.

However, this risk is greatly reduced when injection immunotherapy is administered in controlled clinical settings where patients are continuously monitored and, when necessary, treatment is promptly and effectively given.³

Usually, side effects are limited to the mouth (oral itching or swelling) or to gastrointestinal tract (stomach-ache, nausea) and tend to disappear after the first doses.

Severe systemic side effects have been described only sporadically and may lead to stop treatment.³

IN ALL CASES:

- **Carefully read the patient information leaflet provided with your treatment.**
- **If you are receiving allergy immunotherapy and experience side effects,** seek medical advice immediately from your doctor and/or pharmacist.
 - This includes any possible side effects not listed in this leaflet.
 - By reporting side effects you can help provide more information on the safety of medicines.
 - You can also report side effects directly via the national reporting system.⁴



1. Canonica GW, *et al.* World Allergy Organ J 2014;7:6.
2. Bousquet J, *et al.* Allergy 2008;63(S86):8-160.
3. <http://www.eaaci.org/patients/diagnosis-and-treatment/allergy-specific-treatment/allergen-immunotherapy-vaccines.html> [accessed on March 15, 2016].
4. For European countries, please refer to CMDh website: http://www.hma.eu/nationalcontacts_hum.html

YOUR RESPIRATORY ALLERGIES CAN AND SHOULD BE EFFECTIVELY TREATED!

Allergy Immunotherapy^{1,2,3}

- May decrease your risk of developing asthma or new allergies
- Addresses the underlying cause of your allergy
- Has a long-lasting persistent effect on your allergy symptoms, even after treatment cessation

Learn more about your respiratory allergies and the management options available by visiting and [clicking on the I-START program](#).

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1. Pawankar *et al*, WAO White Book on Allergy Update 2013: Executive Summary. http://www.worldallergy.org/definingthespecialty/white_book.php [accessed on March 21, 2016].
2. Bousquet, J *et al*, Allergic Rhinitis and its Impact on Asthma (ARIA) 2008. Vol 63, suppl. 86, 2008.
3. Jutel, M *et al*, International consensus on allergy immunotherapy, JACI vol. 136, n. 3.



I STARTTM
P R O G R A M
Integrated Solutions for Targeted Allergy Treatment

I-START (Integrated Solutions for Targeted Allergy Treatment) is:

- **A new and innovative program**
- **Aims to improve access to information about appropriate medical care** for people living with respiratory allergies
- **A gateway to help you better understand and manage your allergy**

Developed in partnership with GAAPP



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