

Facts About Allergy Shots

- Allergy shots are an effective and safe treatment for people who suffer from a variety of allergic diseases, including allergic rhinitis (hay fever), asthma and insect stings.
- The treatment, also known as immunotherapy or allergy immunization, works by introducing small amounts of purified substances to which the person is allergic in gradually increasing amounts. The allergy shots improve the patient's natural resistance to the allergens and minimize or eliminate the need for medications.
- Allergy shots usually must be continued for several years but sometimes can be discontinued with immunity maintained for a lifetime.
- Allergy shots have been available since the early part of the century. The treatment has been continuously improved and refined.
- Performed by a trained and experienced physician, allergy shots are very safe. However, because the treatment involves introducing a substance to which the person is allergic, in rare cases severe reactions can occur. It is recommended that only allergists, or other physicians with special training, administer or supervise allergy shots.
- Allergy shots are one component of the treatment of allergies and asthma. Others are avoidance of the allergens that cause symptoms and appropriate medications to control symptoms.
- Research continues to show that besides decreasing symptoms, allergy shots may also prevent the development of asthma in some patients with allergic rhinitis and, if begun early, may prevent future allergies.