ALLERGY IMMUNOTHERAPY OVERVIEW

Your ENT or allergist has recommended you receive allergy treatment (immunotherapy). This information sheet will help you to understand the types of immunotherapy available. With this in mind, you will be able to decide which therapy will be best suited for you.

Remember that allergy immunotherapy is not a quick fix. It requires a commitment from you and no matter which therapy you choose the minimum length of time you will be under treatment will be three years.

The therapy familiar to most patients is the traditional allergy shots. In this practice, injections are given in our Woodbury, Voorhees, Haddonfield, Willingboro, Mount Laurel and Washington Township offices. When you begin allergy injections, you will be coming to the office once a week for approximately 24-32 weeks. This may be longer for some patients depending on reactions that may occur and compliance. The interval between injections will eventually be lengthened to every four weeks. **If you are on allergy shots, you are required to carry an Epinephrine auto-injector on the days you get your shots.**

You will need to make an appointment for your allergy injections (beyond your original allergy injection appointment at the beginning of your treatment). We will try to accommodate you at a convenient appointment time. **You will be required to wait in the office for 30 minutes after your injection so that you may be checked for any evidence of reaction to the injection.** This is done for your safety and is strictly enforced.

**PLEASE NOTE: once you have signed consent for allergy immunotherapy, allergy serum will be mixed that is specific to you and cannot be used for anyone else. For this reason, should you decide not to pursue injection therapy after this serum has been mixed and billed to your insurance, you will still be responsible for any balance that remains after payment from your insurance.**

You may want to check with your insurance company regarding coverage of allergy injections. Some insurance companies require you to submit a copay with every injection and some do not. Some patients receive one injection, but most of our patients receive two injections each visit. The insurance (CPT) codes for allergy injections are 95115 (one injection) and 95117 (two injections). The CPT code for the Serum is 95165. This will be made every three months. **If you are considering choosing allergy injections as your therapy, you should give your insurance company a call to check on your financial responsibility for allergy injections, using the codes above, and tell them that you would be receiving the injection only and not an office visit.**

The second therapy option is sublingual immunotherapy (allergy drops). In this therapy, a vaccine is prepared in much the same way as the vaccine that is used for injections. The difference is that it is
administered under the tongue rather than injected. Your first dose is given in the office, at which time you will be instructed on how to give the drops. We use a once a day dosing schedule. We have been treating patients with sublingual drops since 2006. We have had excellent results considering the short time it has been in use. Your allergy drops will last six months, at which time new bottles will need to be ordered. You will receive a reminder via e-mail, phone or text when it is time to reorder a new set of vials for 6 more months. At that time (or soon thereafter), you should call the allergy nurse to order your vials and to ask any questions you may have.

There is no insurance (CPT) code for allergy drops and no insurance companies cover this treatment. Our current charge for six months of sublingual therapy is $325.00 (which must be paid before the drops are ordered). This would be equivalent to the expense of allergy injections with an $13.50 copay for each weekly visit. Patients are required to pay for the drops and are given a receipt at the time the drops are ordered. You may use this receipt for Flexible Health Spending Accounts (Personal Wellness Accounts) or tax purposes (if applicable).

Studies done for both therapies have shown that over three years, the effectiveness of each therapy was very similar.

When you begin allergy immunotherapy (IT), you do not have to discontinue your allergy medications. In time, as the IT starts to take effect, you will be able to take less medication and you may gradually be weaned from your current allergy prescriptions or over-the-counter medications.

You should be scheduled to follow up with your ENT physician or allergist at six-month intervals throughout your course of treatment.

Signature_________________________________________  Date__________________________

Witness____________________________________________

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