

TEXAS REGIONAL ASTHMA AND ALLERGY CENTER, L.L.P.

Board Certified specialists in allergy, asthma, immunology, and respiratory disorders

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What is Cluster Immunotherapy (CIT)?

- ◆ cluster immunotherapy is an accelerated method of injections for rapidly desensitizing patients to environmental allergens
- ◆ cluster immunotherapy is an accelerated schedule of shots that is used to reach the maintenance (target) dose period quicker than the conventional method, which can take 7-9 months.
- ◆ cluster accelerated immunotherapy schedules are beneficial because the number of overall visits and injections are significantly reduced and the patient reaches monthly injections earlier.
- ◆ the goal is for the patient to feel better sooner because of a more rapid initial desensitization and earlier development of immune tolerance to allergens

What is the benefit of Cluster immunotherapy?

- ◆ the number of overall visits and injections are significantly reduced and the patient reaches monthly injections earlier.
- ◆ the cluster schedule would minimize the number of visits to the office for allergy injections by almost half.
- ◆ one week of cluster immunotherapy advances you to the same level as 12 injections under the conventional method, saving you between 6-12 weeks of time and injections.

When is this procedure performed and how long will it take?

- ◆ consists of 1 or 2 half day visits in one week, each 48-72 hours apart.
- ◆ during each visit, approximately 3 or more allergy injections are given under the skin in regular 30 minute intervals (average 3 injections over 60 minutes).
- ◆ once the injections are completed, the nurse will continue to monitor the patient for a period of 90-120 minutes afterwards for any allergy signs or symptoms, as there is a risk of an allergic reaction.
- ◆ details regarding scheduling will be discussed with each patient once a decision has been made to proceed with cluster immunotherapy.

Are there any pre-medications required?

- ◆ premedication generally consists only of 2 different types of antihistamines (Zyrtec 10mg and Zantac 150mg) to be taken no later than 2 hours prior to each cluster visit and other medications as ordered by your provider.
- ◆ adjustments to the premedication regimen are at your doctor's discretion on a case by case basis.
- ◆ details regarding any pre-medication that may be required will be discussed with each patient once a decision has been made to proceed with cluster immunotherapy.

How often and how long will I need to come after cluster immunotherapy?

- ◆ once cluster immunotherapy is finished you will then be able to come 1-2 times weekly for the rest of your injections and continue to build up to your maintenance dose as normally done.
- ◆ immunotherapy would still need to be continued for total of 3-5 years as it normally would to build long-term tolerance.

What are some drawbacks or risks of Cluster Immunotherapy?

- ◆ anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction) which we help reduce with premedication and tested protocols
- ◆ still requires you to take allergy medication during your allergy injections
- ◆ higher risk of allergic reactions compared to traditional immunotherapy

What are some reactions to immunotherapy?

- ◆ local reactions (swelling, itching, or tenderness at the injection sites)
- ◆ systemic reaction, which may include:

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- tightness in the chest and/or throat, coughing and or wheezing
 - nausea and vomiting, abdominal cramps
 - lightheadedness or faintness

What do I bring on the day of the procedure?

- ◆ Books, laptop, or other items to occupy your time while in the office.
- ◆ wear a short sleeve or sleeveless shirt
- ◆ have a light breakfast the morning of the procedure