

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

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

RENE A. LEON, M.D. ALI SHAKOURI, M.D. SHARON SETH, M.D. ALAYNA POWERS, RN, FNP-C

900 East Southlake Blvd. Suite 300 Southlake Texas 76092 (817) 421-0770 (817) 421-4759 (Fax)

4312 Heritage Trace Pkwy. Ste 708 Fort Worth, TX 76244 (817) 421-0770 (817) 562-5008 (Fax)

WEBSITE: www.traac.org

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:
 - hives, itchy eyes, nose or throat, runny nose, nasal congestion, sneezing

- 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