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IMMUNOTHERAPY (Allergy Injection Therapy)

The best treatment for allergies is to eliminate the allergens. Since we are unable to eliminate all of the allergens from the air you breathe, the next best effective form of treatment is allergy injections containing the substances that you are allergic to. This type of treatment is to begin after determining the allergens that you react to by clinical history and skin testing.

MECHANISM: Subcutaneous injections of allergy extracts stimulate resistance or immunity to these specific allergens which cause your symptoms. The amount of allergens in these injections increases in each succeeding dose so that a maximum or maintenance dose is reached. This maximum tolerated dose could be different for each person depending on their own allergic sensitivity.

DURATION: Injection therapy is usually continued for approximately four to five years. Usually, it is discontinued after the patient has experienced two consecutive allergy seasons with minimal symptoms.

FREQUENCY: In the beginning, injections are given weekly until maintenance dose is reached. Injections are then spaced at increasing intervals until finally, after two years, they are given only once in four weeks.

REGULARITY: "THE ALLERGY INJECTION TREATMENTS MUST BE GIVEN REGULARLY!" If the interval between injections is longer than a week, the planned increase in dosage often cannot be given or it may have to be even reduced. Irregularity may make it impossible to reach the desired dosage before the allergy season starts. The protection that might have been attained is lessened accordingly. **DO NOT MISS TREATMENT!**

REACTIONS:

1. The dosage in allergy injections occasionally exceeds the limits of tolerance. This may cause minimal discomfort in the form of slight swelling, itching and redness at the injection site. This is to be expected and tells us that things are proceeding normally.
2. If, however, a large local area of redness like a half dollar size is noted, or if there is swelling or a welt the size of a dime, it should be called to the nurse's attention at the time of the next visit --- BEFORE the next set of injections is administered.

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3. Severe reactions to the allergy injections can cause coughing, wheezing, sneezing, itching of the palms, lips, nose and roof of mouth, tightening of the throat and skin rashes. Life threatening reactions are rare. If these symptoms occur while in the office, report to us at once. If these symptoms occur after you have left the office, come back to the office immediately or go to the nearest emergency room (whichever is the closest). Please call the office first --- if the office is closed, go to the nearest emergency room.
4. After each allergy injection --- **REMAIN IN THE OFFICE FOR 25 MINUTES.** Always report to the nurse before you leave for reading your reaction to injections. This will enable us to determine the next dosage.

SCHEDULING CONFLICTS: If a scheduling conflict prohibits you from taking injections at the location you normally come to, call the office during shot hours. Your shot sheet will be taken over to the other office.

INFORM THE DOCTOR IF YOU ARE PREGNANT OR TAKING ANY NEW MEDICATION. Beta blocker medications which are commonly used to treat high blood pressure, chest pain and migraine headaches make it harder to treat any reactions to your allergy injections. This medicine makes your allergy injection treatment risky. Check with your physician first, if you are on a beta blocker, before starting allergy injections.

Do not take allergy injections if you have a temperature greater than 100 degrees Fahrenheit or if you are having an increase in your asthma symptoms in the 24 hour period prior to the allergy injections. You may want to see the Doctor for medication adjustment. You may receive allergy injections while on antibiotics.

Do not exercise one hour before or until one hour after the allergy injections.

All patients receiving immunotherapy are required to have an office visit every five months. During that visit, progress with allergy injections will be reviewed and also medications are adjusted.

You will be receiving the following allergy injections:

RT UPPER ARM _____

LT UPPER ARM _____

RT LOWER ARM _____

LT LOWER ARM _____