

Instructions for Sublingual Immunotherapy (SLIT) Administration

General points

Immune cells under the lining of the tongue are used to pick up the antigen which you are allergic to. When performing SLIT the antigen must sit under the tongue for 2 minutes and then can be swallowed. This can be done with either a medicine dropper or a small syringe without a needle. The vial can be stored in a room temperature cabinet.

Side Effects

The most rare but serious side effect is anaphylaxis which is a severe systemic allergic reaction. Prior to starting SLIT you should have your epipen available and be very familiar with how to use it in an emergency. Symptoms of anaphylaxis start typically with body itching and hives on the skin followed by chest tightness and difficulty breathing. If you think you are having this you should use your epipen and then immediately call either the office (805) 614-9250 during the day if you are unsure if you are having a reaction or 911 anytime you are having a significant reaction or during all non-office hours.

A common but less severe side effect is itching in the mouth. If you start to develop vomiting, significant abdominal pain or painful swallowing or feeling of food getting stuck, contact your allergy doctor.

If you have asthma and at any point in treatment your symptoms are worsening, you should be seen by a physician.

Details

When you start sublingual immunotherapy (SLIT) you will receive 2 dropper bottles labelled “escalation” and “maintenance”. Start using the “escalation” vial first. Using a dropper place 3 drops underneath the tongue daily for one week. Then place 6 drops under the tongue daily for the second week.

After 2 weeks you will only use the “maintenance” vial. Place either 0.2mL with a small syringe (no needle) or 5 drops with a dropper bottle under the tongue. This should last about 6-7 weeks. We typically start with the least amount of antigen necessary which has a significant effect in most people in order to reduce your cost. If you are not having a much benefit the dosage may be increasing in terms of the concentration, amount administered or both. A small percentage of people will not have a significant improvement in symptoms with immunotherapy.