

Sublingual Immunotherapy

Information and advice for patients

Immunology

What is sublingual immunotherapy?

Sublingual immunotherapy or desensitisation is a treatment given under the tongue with the allergen you are allergic to, in order to promote and improve your body's tolerance of that specific allergen. This improved tolerance should then help to improve your symptoms.

What are the benefits?

Immunotherapy aims to improve your symptoms in relation to your allergy, which should help to improve your quality of life.

What are the risks?

Side effects can occur although not everybody will get them. Severe reactions are extremely rare. Local reactions are common which are usually associated with mouth itching, swelling under the tongue and irritation of the throat, these are easily controlled with anti-histamines. Because of this risk all treatment is commenced in hospital under supervision and you will be monitored for at least 30 minutes after your first dose.

If you experience serious side effects whilst on treatment you should contact us on the numbers below or your GP. In the event of an emergency you should attend your local A&E or call 999 for an ambulance.

What are the risks of not having the treatment/operation/test?

There are no risks of not having the treatment but without the treatment your symptoms will remain the same as at present.

Are there any alternatives to this treatment/operation/test?

Alternative treatment options will have already been trialled and deemed insufficient in controlling your symptoms.

Preparing for the treatment?

You will be advised fully at your first appointment the correct technique for administering the medication and this should be followed.

You should refrain from taking your treatment should you have any open areas within your oral cavity, such as mouth ulcers or recent tooth extractions. The area should be healed before treatment is recommenced.

Sublingual Immunotherapy

Information and advice for patients

Immunology

Can I have this treatment if I am pregnant?

We will not start immunotherapy if you are already pregnant. However, if you become pregnant whilst you are established on treatment, this can be continued.

What about my other medication?

Your current medication will be reviewed prior to commencement on therapy as there are a number of contra-indicated medications. It is your responsibility to inform either the doctor or nurse if you are commenced on any new medication or diagnosed with a new health condition.

During the treatment

What does the treatment involve?

The treatment is in the form of either a dissolvable tablet or liquid drops which are placed under the tongue and held there for at least two minutes. This should be repeated on a daily basis as instructed at your first appointment.

How long will the treatment last?

All treatments are for a three year period and treatment should be taken daily throughout this period without any breaks. If you do have a break in treatment for any reason this should be discussed with either the nurse or doctor so advice can be given regarding continuation of treatment.

What commitment is expected from me?

By accepting and starting this treatment you should commit to the 3-year period, attending for your follow-up appointments in telephone clinic every 3 months. Your next appointment will be made for you before leaving the clinic to ensure dates are convenient for you. Should you need to change your appointment, this should be done as far in advance as possible to ensure you can be reviewed before your medication runs out.

You will need to collect your prescriptions from the hospital, unless you are on Grazax and your GP continues the prescriptions. This will be discussed with you at your appointment.

After the treatment

You will take your first dose in hospital and will be monitored for at least 30 minutes before being discharged.

Sublingual Immunotherapy

Information and advice for patients

Immunology

Going home

You should not partake in any strenuous activity or exercise for an hour after taking your medication, to minimise the risk of a reaction.

Follow-up

You will be reviewed in telephone clinic on a regular basis and treatment will be reviewed for efficacy, side effects and tolerability.

Symptoms to report

You should report any symptoms associated to your treatment at your review, however, you should contact the department if you are experiencing side effects which you weren't expecting or that affect you taking the treatment.

Conditions of acceptance and continuation of treatment

Due to the nature of this treatment and the numbers of patients currently on or waiting to commence treatment, your acceptance of these conditions means you will attend all your appointments and not fail to attend, other than if genuinely unwell or in the event of an emergency.

Patients who regularly fail to attend or make late cancellations will have their treatment discontinued, unless there are good reasons for their non-attendance.

I accept the conditions as listed above:

Signed: (Patient) (Date)

Signed: (Dr/Nurse) (Date)

Sublingual Immunotherapy

Information and advice for patients

Immunology

Further information or advice:

Allergy nurses – 0121 507 5695 swbh.allergynurses@nhs.net

Available: Monday – Friday 8:30am-4:30pm

Consultant's secretaries – 0121 507 4250

swbh.cityimmunology@nhs.net

More information can be found can be found at:

NHS

www.nhs.uk

Allergy UK

www.allergyuk.org

(Websites accessed 2 May 2023)

For more information about our hospitals and services please see our websites

www.swbh.nhs.uk, follow us on Twitter @SWBHnhs and like us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/SWBHnhs.

If you would like to suggest any amendments or improvements to this leaflet please contact SWB Library Services on ext 3587 or email swbh.library@nhs.net.



A Teaching Trust of The University of Birmingham
Incorporating City, Sandwell and Rowley Regis Hospitals
© Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust

ML5016

Issue Date: May 2023

Review Date: May 2026