

## Sublingual Immunotherapy (SLIT)



### How is the treatment given?

This treatment involves a daily dose of allergen being administered as a tablet or drops under the tongue. It is important to take the medication every day. The first dose is given in hospital and subsequent doses at home.

An improvement in symptoms occurs in the first season, but it is necessary to continue for 3 years to get lasting benefit.

### Side effects

#### Common

- Local symptoms such as itching in the mouth, but this improves during the first few weeks.
- Indigestion symptoms
- Throat discomfort
- Rhinitis symptoms e.g runny nose

#### Rare

- Tightness of the chest or wheeze
- Anaphylaxis



## Tree & Grass Pollen Immunotherapy

### Patient Information Leaflet

#### Immunology Service

#### Haematology and Oncology Directorate

Specialist Nurse tel: 01782 672504

Secretary's tel: 01782 674284

#### Further information

[www.allergyuk.org](http://www.allergyuk.org)

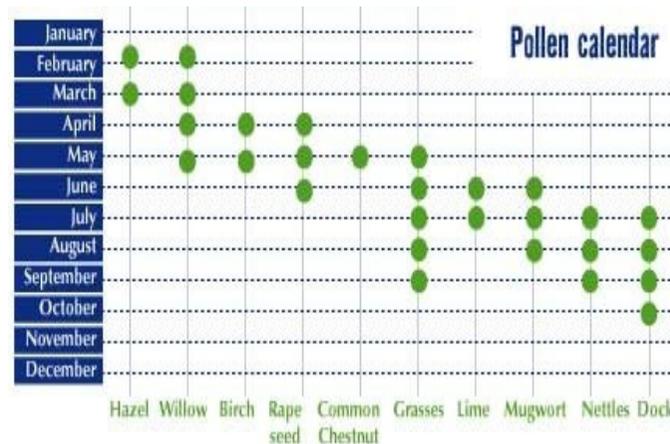
Allergy UK, Planwell House, LEFA Business Park, Edgington Way, Sidcup, Kent. DA14 5BH

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#### Patient Advice and Liaison Service

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## What is immunotherapy?

Immunotherapy, often referred to as desensitisation, is the only proven treatment that can reduce allergy symptoms in the long-term. Immunotherapy is a well-established treatment for certain severe allergies, and involves the administration of gradually increasing doses of allergen extracts over a period of years. It is given to patients by injection or drops/tablets under the tongue (sublingual).

On average people with hay fever have about 30% improvement in symptoms following immunotherapy. The success of the treatment can vary between individuals. Some people will be almost free of symptoms, most will still need some medication, and a small number of patients will not show any improvement at all. We will review your symptoms after the first year.

## Can everyone have immunotherapy?

No. Not all individuals with hay fever are suitable for this treatment. Your consultant will decide whether or not you are a good candidate to receive this treatment.

Immunotherapy is not recommended in patients with poorly controlled asthma as they are more likely to experience severe reactions. It should also not be commenced during pregnancy.

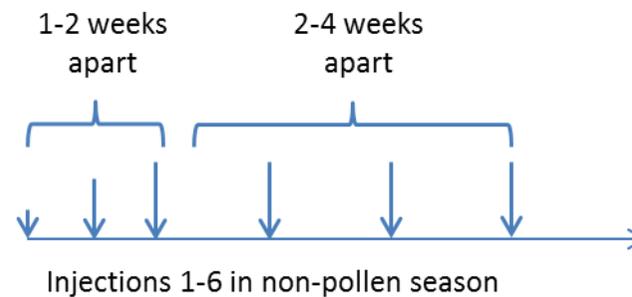
## Subcutaneous Immunotherapy

### How is the treatment given?

Immunotherapy should take place before the tree or grass pollen season starts. The injection has to be administered in hospital so you can be closely monitored.



Immunotherapy involves a total of 6 injections per year being administered just under the skin on your arm. The dose will be slowly increased every 7-14 days for 3 injections and then 3 further injections every 14-28 days. Treatment is continued for 3 years. You will have to be observed for at least 1 hour after the injection.



### What you should know about the injections.

- You should let us know if you have: been feeling unwell in the 24 hours preceding the treatment; started new medication or have had vaccinations since your last injection.
- You should not eat a large meal immediately

before the injection is administered and limit alcohol consumption

- You should not take any strenuous exercise for 12 hours after the injection.

### What happens if I miss my injection?

- It is important that you try and attend your appointments as per the schedule.
- If you are 2 weeks late for having an injection, the treatment regime would have to start from the beginning.

### Side effects

#### Common

- Redness and slight swelling at the injection site. These can be treated by applying ice packs and/or taking an antihistamine (e.g. Cetirizine 10 mg tablet)
- Feeling tired and lethargic– this is often temporary and should resolve within a few hours

#### Less common

- Symptoms of hay fever or nettle rash/ hives (also called urticaria).

#### Rare

- Chest tightness and wheeze
- Anaphylactic shock

If you develop any side effects, please inform the allergy team.