



Northern Illinois ENT Specialists, LTD
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ENVIRONMENTAL ALLERGY/IMMUNOTHERAPY and TESTING

General Information:

- ◆ Environmental allergy represents an exaggerated response to normal stimuli in the environment.
- ◆ Environmental allergy can present at any time during one's lifetime.
- ◆ Environmental allergy affects many millions of Americans per year and represents a significant cost burden to health care.

Allergy Skin Testing:

- ◆ Represents the most sensitive form of testing
- ◆ Can take between 30-60 minutes to complete
- ◆ Basic testing in this office includes testing for dust mites, mold, corn pollen, cats, dogs, weeds, ragweed, local trees, and grass. Other specific tests are available.
- ◆ You will be required to stop some medications prior to testing and this will be reviewed with you.

Guidelines for Allergy Testing:

- ◆ *Do not take any antihistamines, decongestants or sinus headache medication for at least 7 days before testing. Plain Tylenol or aspirin is okay.*
- ◆ Asthmatic patients on medication should check with office for specific instructions.
- ◆ Bring a list of all the medications you take regularly.
- ◆ If you must take an antibiotic within 2 weeks before testing, please call the office.
- ◆ Arms cannot be sunburned at the time of allergy testing.
- ◆ Be sure to eat breakfast or lunch before testing.
- ◆ Wear short sleeves or a sleeveless top.
- ◆ You may be asked to fill out an allergy questionnaire.

Treatment of Allergy:

- ◆ **Avoidance:** Avoiding and/or eliminating allergens is always an option. Cats and dogs can be easy to avoid (unless they are already in your house!). Avoiding dust mites and molds and even some trees, weeds and grasses can be difficult but there are strategies we can discuss.
- ◆ **Medications:** Medications fall into two categories-preventative medications and escape medications.
 - Preventative medications include all daily medications such as anti-histamines, leukotrine inhibitors, daily nasal steroids, mast cell inhibitors and nasal rinses.
 - Escape medications are just taken when symptoms are at there worst. Anti-histamines are the most often used escape medications and can be taken only "as needed"

Immunotherapy:

Immunotherapy is specialized therapy designed to increase your resistance to the stimuli to your allergy. Over a period of time, you are provided increasing doses of the allergens until your body is no longer as responsive to the allergens. This process can take from 6 months to 3 years. Immunotherapy is designed to hopefully eliminate any dependence on preventative medications and allow for you to only require occasional "escape" medications. Immunotherapy requires a significant commitment by you, the patient, as escalating the dose of allergen takes consistent visits. Immunotherapy in this office is made as easy as possible for your convenience.

As always call if there are any questions: 815-758-8106