

Cluster Backup

Immunotherapy Patients:

Probably the most frustrating thing about being on allergy injections is that after you are finally built up to maintenance levels (the “red vial”), every time we refill the vials, we have to reduce your dose and build back up to maintenance levels all over again.

The reduction in dose is needed because the proteins in your treatment vials gradually break down over time and even though the new vial is mixed with exactly the same contents, it can be significantly more potent than the old vial. Any time there is a large increase in the dose of your immunotherapy, reactions are much more likely.

For the past few decades, we have minimized the risk of an allergic reaction when giving an injection out of a new vial by dropping the dose to about 50% of the last dose, and building back up with once a week injections. That remains the recommendation in the “Practice Parameters” published by national allergy organizations.

Now there is a new option that is certainly worth considering. A study that was done in San Antonio and presented at the 2014 meeting of the American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology and at the Texas Allergy, Asthma and Immunology Society looked at the option of having patients take two injections in one day, each containing 50% of the previous dose from the old vial. These were done 30 minutes apart and as usual, the patient waited in the office for 30 minutes after the second injection. The patients were then allowed to come back at their usual every 4-6weeks interval. Fifty-three patients participated in the study. None of the 52patients who were on their 2nd more refill vials had any reactions either on the day they got the two injections or when they came back 2-6 weeks later for their next “shot”. One patient, who was given injections from her first refill vial, had a mild systemic reaction and had to be given epinephrine.

This study would suggest that you can safely come in for your first injection from a refill vial and take two injections separated by thirty minutes and be back at maintenance immunotherapy with no further build up. This saves you from having to come back weekly for 4—5 weeks to get back to “maintenance”

In view of the one reaction that occurred in the one patient who was given injections from her first refill vial, we will wait until the second refill before offering this option to our patients. As always, any allergy injection can cause a systemic reaction. That is why you must always wait 30 minutes in the clinic after getting your injection. However, this new alternative may make long term “allergy shots” much more convenient than they have ever been before.

If you are interested in trying this “Cluster” technique with your new vials, sign below:

Signature: _____

Date: _____