



Allergy Immunotherapy (AIT)

**A different way
to manage your
allergy symptoms**

Do you feel that allergies control your life?

For many people with allergies, their symptoms are so bad that it changes how they live. If your allergies are that bad, you might have tried a variety of allergy medications. If you are still experiencing symptoms, immunotherapy may be an option for you.

One choice you may have is allergy immunotherapy, also called AIT. AIT targets your immune system to help make you less sensitive to certain allergens. It may be an option to consider if you are still experiencing symptoms after trying allergy products, like antihistamines and nasal steroid sprays. This booklet can help you decide if AIT is right for you.



Should I be considered for AIT?

If you answer yes to any of the following, ask your doctor for a referral to an allergist:

	YES	NO
My allergy symptoms interfere with my ability to get a restful sleep		
My allergy symptoms make me feel fatigued		
My allergy symptoms interfere with my daily activities		
My allergy symptoms make it difficult to perform well at school or work		
Medications do not provide enough relief of my allergy symptoms		
If there are alternatives to medications, I would like to know about them		
It is difficult for me to avoid exposure to allergens (e.g., pollens, dust)		

What is AIT?

With AIT, you can do more than just treat allergy symptoms. Allergies happen when your body's immune system reacts to allergens in your environment by attacking them. AIT trains your body's immune system to help make you less sensitive to the allergen.

AIT introduces small amounts of allergens into your body so your immune system can gradually learn to tolerate them better.



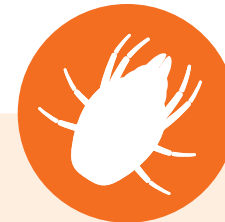
Some of the most common allergens are:

Outdoor/seasonal allergens



Outdoor allergens include grass, ragweed, and tree pollens. These are called seasonal allergens because they mainly bother you during certain months of the year and in certain parts of the country.

Indoor/perennial allergens



Indoor allergens include house dust mites, pet dander, and molds. These are called perennial allergens because they can bother you all year long.

You can have more than one type of allergy. In fact, you can have both seasonal and perennial allergies.

Proven to fight allergies

AIT is made from standardized extracts of the allergen substances that cause allergies, like pollen from plants. Over time, AIT trains your immune system to become less sensitive to the allergen so you experience fewer symptoms.

AIT is a proven way of fighting allergies that can have beneficial effects that extend well beyond the treatment period. Speak to your allergy specialist about which AIT options are right for you or your child.



AIT is a way to help your body build a tolerance to allergens.

There are 2 types of AIT

Allergy shots

- Time-tested form of AIT that has been used for over 100 years
- In some cases, e.g. for dust mite allergies, the shots can be custom mixed by your allergy specialist based on your specific allergy triggers
- Always given at a clinic or allergy specialist's office

Immunotherapy tablets

- Prescription tablets available for use in Canada
- Taken daily
- After your first dose at the doctor's office, the tablet can be taken at home or wherever you choose

Both forms of AIT have been known to cause severe systemic allergic reactions that may require epinephrine. This happens in very few people but it is important to be aware of. Talk to your doctor about these risks prior to starting AIT treatment.

It takes time for AIT to work, but it can have beneficial effects that extend well beyond the treatment period. So, it is important to stick with your therapy.



Testing for allergies

Finding out what you are allergic to is the first step to treating your allergies. Your allergy specialist will usually use skin tests to find out what you are allergic to. This can even be done with small children. Skin testing is simple, and you can get the results quickly. Allergy specialists are experts in this kind of testing! You will soon know what is causing your allergy symptoms and can take action.

How to best work with your allergy specialist to help you fight allergies

You and your allergy specialist will talk about your allergies, lifestyle, and treatment goals. Then you will decide together which allergy medicine is best for you. Things you might talk about include

- Age
- Where you or your child lives, works, or goes to school
- Travel plans
- Whether you can commit to regular office visits
- Cost, including trips to the doctor, insurance co-pays, and the cost of medicine



Ask your doctor for a referral to an allergy specialist if you think Allergy Immunotherapy might be an option for you.

Staying on your therapy

AIT is not a quick fix, but it can be a lasting one. It takes some time for your immune system to gradually build a tolerance to allergens, so it is important to stay on AIT for the duration of therapy—even if you don't feel like you have symptoms anymore. If you stop taking your medication too soon, it won't have time to work.

- Remember, AIT can treat your allergies, but it works gradually
- AIT can have beneficial effects that extend well beyond the treatment period
- Talk to your doctor about how to make sure you stay on AIT for the best results



Resources and further reading

Still have questions? Visit these websites to find out more about allergies and treatment options.

Allergy Academy

www.allergyacademy.org/

Allergy Asthma & Immunology Society of Ontario

www.allergyasthma.on.ca/

American Academy of Allergy Asthma & Immunology

www.aaaai.org/

American College of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology

www.acaai.org/

Canadian Society of Allergy and Clinical Immunology

www.csaci.ca/

Mayo Clinic

www.mayoclinic.org/

Notes: _____

Fight your allergies with allergy immunotherapy (AIT)

This booklet will help you learn

- What causes your allergies
- How to do more than just treat your allergy symptoms
- About AIT: a way to help make you less sensitive to allergens

Work with your allergy specialist to decide which treatment is right for you.

Brought to you by one of Canada's leading pharmaceutical research-based companies.