



## POLLEN AND DUST MITE IMMUNOTHERAPY

### Background

Immunotherapy/desensitisation to either dust mites or pollens are generally recommended when your child has had severe allergic rhinitis ('hayfever') which has responded poorly to conventional therapy of allergen avoidance, antihistamines and nasal steroid sprays.

### Adverse reactions to the injections

Although majority of patients tolerate immunotherapy very well, about 25% of patient can have an allergic reaction to the injections. Most allergic reactions are mild, localised swelling over the injection site. Uncommonly however, a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis) can occur. Hence, we take all precautions to ensure that this risk is minimised by ensuring your child is well on the day, and in particular if they have asthma that it is well controlled.

### Schedule

The usual duration of immunotherapy for pollens and dust mite is **3 YEARS**. Because of the potential for having an adverse reaction to the immunotherapy injections, we initially start with extremely small doses in hospital (build up phase or 'rush day') before reaching the target dose, which is then given every 4 weeks by your family doctor locally (maintenance phase) for 3 years.

Please note that the schedule below represents the shortest possible time period. If your child develops any adverse reactions to the injections, or has had to miss any injections due to being unwell - the schedule will then be **longer** than the one below. If you had any questions about your child's immunotherapy schedule, please do not hesitate to discuss this with the medical/nursing staff.

Week number	Day	Site	Dose
1	Tuesday/Wednesday	Hospital	0.01 IR
2	Tuesday/Wednesday	Hospital	0.02 IR
3	Tuesday/Wednesday	Hospital	0.04 IR
4	Tuesday/Wednesday	Hospital	0.08 IR
5	Tuesday/Wednesday	Hospital	0.1 IR
6	Tuesday/Wednesday	Hospital	0.2 IR
7	Tuesday/Wednesday	Hospital	0.4 IR
8	Tuesday/Wednesday	Hospital	0.8 IR
9	Tuesday/Wednesday	Hospital	1 IR
10	Tuesday/Wednesday	Hospital	2 IR
11	Tuesday/Wednesday	Hospital	4 IR
12	Tuesday/Wednesday	Hospital	8 IR
13			
14	Tuesday/Wednesday	Hospital	8 IR
15			



16			
17	Tuesday/Wednesday	Hospital	8 IR
18			
19			
20			
21	Tuesday/Wednesday	Hospital	8 IR
22			
23			
24			
25		GP	8 IR

### Immunotherapy clinic days

Children usually attend school for half-a-day on their injection days. As excessive physical activity after immunotherapy may potentially increase the risk of having an adverse reaction, we do **NOT** recommend that your child does any physical exercise (including the attendance of any sports training sessions) for the rest of the day after the injections.

### Cost and obtaining of dust mite/pollen immunotherapy

1. The approximate cost of immunotherapy
  - o For single extract (dust mite or pollens only) is \$400/year
  - o For two extracts (dust mite and pollens) is \$800/year
2. Your child's script for the dust mite/pollen extract (Alustal) has been sent to Wood's Pharmacy (ground floor of RCH)
3. When you receive this letter, please call Wood's Pharmacy on (03) 9349 2315, to check that they have received this and to arrange payment.
4. Please do organise a new script for more extract from your doctor when this is running low, which usually occurs every 5 months.

### Preparation for immunotherapy days

1. On the day of the immunotherapy injection, give your child a dose of Zyrtec (0.25mg/kg, maximum 10 mg), 2 hours prior to the scheduled injection
2. Bring your child's regular medications (e.g. puffers, tablets), and continue taking these as prescribed.
3. It is important that your child is completely well for these injections. Should your child become unwell (e.g. fevers, cough, worsening asthma) before the appointment, please contact the allergy nursing staff during work hours on 9345 1066.

### Ongoing follow-up

Your child will be initially followed up in the Allergy Clinic at 3 months, 6 months and then every 12 months after completion of the up-dosing phase.

If you have any queries at all, please do not hesitate to contact the Allergy Department on (03) 9345 5701