Sublingual Immunotherapy Fact Sheet

- Currently, the only treatment known to change underlying allergic disease is immunotherapy. Through immunotherapy, patients receive small amounts of the substance that causes their allergies, helping to build tolerance to the substance.

- Sublingual immunotherapy, also known as allergy drops, work by delivering a small dose of what a patient is allergic to under the tongue, helping the patient’s body build a tolerance to the specific allergens that cause allergic reactions.

- Allergy drops work like allergy shots using the same physician-prescribed and FDA approved antigens, but the route of administration is delivered under the tongue in a liquid drop form.

- Varying forms of sublingual immunotherapy dosing are practiced; we advocate for patient-tailored dosing that is based specifically on patient test results, history and exam to determine a precise dose that will provide benefit without increasing risk of reactions. Escalating dose based on patient response to individual allergens helps build tolerance safely. The La Crosse Method™ Protocol, which we follow, is based on more than 45 years of clinical use.

- Sublingual administration is an off-label use of an FDA-approved product. Currently, allergen extracts are FDA regulated and labeled for administration by subcutaneous injection. Off-label use is both legal and highly common—especially for complex treatments.
  - Most physicians prescribe “off-label” use of a myriad of drugs today, for example, the use of blood pressure medications for migraines, or the use of arthritis drugs for the treatment of shingles.

- Customized allergy drops are especially helpful and safe for people who can’t tolerate, don’t respond to, or are not eligible for injection immunotherapy including infants and children, severe asthmatics, highly sensitive patients, patients with chronic conditions including sinusitis, patients with food or mold allergies, and patients with multiple allergies including dust, pollens, animals and chemicals.

- Research shows that frequency of drops helps patients feel better faster. Taking allergy drops three times a day keeps the immune system stimulated and helps patients become tolerant to what causes their allergies.

- The advantages of allergy drops include fewer clinic visits for treatment and allergy-related issues, convenience of administration (at home or wherever you need to be), typically reduced need for medications, and less time lost from work and school.

- The World Health Organization has endorsed sublingual immunotherapy as a viable alternative to injection immunotherapy. The Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality (ahrq.gov) determined sublingual immunotherapy to be effective in its 2013 Comparative Effectiveness Review. Additionally, the Cochrane Collaboration, the international gold standard for high quality, trusted health information, concluded allergy drop immunotherapy significantly reduced allergy symptoms and use of allergy medications.
Internationally, the use of sublingual immunotherapy is more common (50 percent in some European countries), with full regulatory and government backing.

The safety profile for sublingual immunotherapy is superior to injection immunotherapy based on research studies and patient treatment experience. Systemic reactions occur three times less with sublingual. With the La Crosse Method Practice Protocol, there has never been an anaphylactic reaction (life threatening) reported within the 45+ years of clinical application.

More than 50 million Americans suffer from allergies, or roughly 20 percent of the population.

Allergies are the root cause of:
- 80 percent of sinusitis – which affects 10 percent of the population
- 70 percent of asthma – which affects 5-10 percent of the population
- 80 percent of skin conditions (eczema, urticaria, hives) – which affects 2-5 percent of the population

Allergic rhinitis (hay fever) impacts 23 percent of the total cost of absenteeism and lost productivity (presenteeism) for employees and their employers.

Allergic conditions are the most common medical condition affecting U.S. children; Asthma is the leading chronic disease among children and the leading reason for missed school days.

According to the National Institutes of Health, allergies account for two million missed school days per year, and on any given day, more than 10,000 children are absent from school because of allergy-related conditions.

Treating the root cause of allergy early in life through immunotherapy can impact the development of further allergies and the development of other chronic conditions, including asthma.

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