



## What can I expect from sublingual immunotherapy treatment for my food allergies?

For many people with food allergies, completely avoiding problem foods isn't easy or even practical. Accidental exposures happen, and sublingual immunotherapy (allergy drops) for foods can help many patients safely build tolerance in case an accidental exposure occurs. For others, it can help them enjoy foods that once caused reactions.

### What food allergies can be treated with sublingual immunotherapy?

The most common food allergies that are treated with sublingual immunotherapy are egg, milk, corn, yeast, wheat, soy, peanut, and shellfish, but more than 100 different foods can be treated if needed.

### How are food allergies diagnosed and tested?

Diagnosing food allergies starts by observing symptoms when troublesome foods are included in a person's diet. Speak with your provider about his/her preferred method of food allergy testing for diagnosis and subsequent tests to determine progress and dose escalation.

### Why treat food and environmental allergies at the same time?

Allergy drops for food allergy is not limited to those with severe food allergies. There are a number of factors to consider if you suspect food allergies. Many of the same symptoms you experience with environmental allergies, such as runny nose, mouth itching, hives, eczema, and skin itching occur with food allergies. If you begin immunotherapy for environmental allergies and aren't seeing results after three to six months, you may consider asking about food allergy treatment.

Food allergy treatment might also be considered if you experience symptoms ranging from upset stomach, fatigue, and loose stools to the most severe of breathing difficulties and anaphylactic shock. You should also consider sublingual immunotherapy if you find it hard to reduce or eliminate foods that cause reactions, especially the most common food allergens such as milk, corn, wheat, and egg.

### How does sublingual immunotherapy for food allergies work?

Treating food allergies with sublingual immunotherapy begins by giving the patient a small amount of antigen placed under the tongue. The amount is enough to prime the immune system to build allergic tolerance over time, yet is below the level that triggers an allergic reaction. The effectiveness of sublingual immunotherapy depends on how often the drops are taken. When using the La Crosse Method™ Protocol for food allergies, we recommend three doses daily.

### How long does it take to see results?

Studies show that improvements in immune tolerance begin within days of starting allergy drops, while more permanent changes require longer. The length of treatment depends on the severity of your allergies and how compliant you are in taking the allergy drops. For mild to moderate allergies, a common treatment length is three to five years; more severe food allergy cases can take longer. For individuals with a history of anaphylaxis, ongoing allergy drops may provide the best relief and protection.

### What is the end goal for the patient treated with sublingual immunotherapy for food allergy?

The goal of allergy drop treatment for food allergy varies by individual. If you have mild to moderate allergies, it may be possible to reintroduce allergic foods into your diet. If you have severe and life-threatening allergies, the goal is to reduce the likelihood of an allergic reaction from an accidental exposure.

### Why is sublingual immunotherapy for food allergy a better alternative than food allergen avoidance?

Allergen avoidance in many situations is not practical for the most common food allergies. For the more severe and life-threatening allergies, allergy drops help develop tolerance so that in the event of an accidental exposure, a person will not experience anaphylaxis. We know that despite everyone's best efforts, accidental exposures can and do occur. Our medical advisors believe that if you totally remove the allergic food from the diet, you may lose the level of tolerance that you already have to the food. This can result in a more severe reaction the next time the you eat the food. Avoidance may be necessary if there is a history of severe reactions to peanuts or tree nuts, for example. In these cases where avoidance is prescribed, sublingual immunotherapy is used to develop tolerance.