

## IMPORTANT ALLERGY IMMUNOTHERAPY INSTRUCTIONS FOR PATIENTS

### Shot Room Hours of Operation

All Shots are given on a walk-in, first-come-first-serve basis.

Our Shreveport shot room is open:

**Monday - Thursday**

8:00am – 11:30am

1:00pm – 4:30pm

**Friday**

1:00pm – 4:30pm

Our Bossier shot room is open:

**Tuesday & Thursday**

8:00am – 11:30am

1:00pm – 4:30pm

**Friday**

8:00am – 11:00am

### Shot Frequency

**Build-Up:** Allergy immunotherapy injections are 1x/week minimum, 3x/week maximum during your initial build-up phase. There must be at least 1 full calendar day in between your immunotherapy injections. If there is more than 1 full calendar week between injections, the previous dose will be repeated or lowered. You will maximize your therapy if you reach your maintenance dose as quickly as possible by coming in for your injections 3x/week.

**Maintenance:** After reaching your maintenance dose (0.5mL of Red [1:1]), you may reduce injection frequency to every other calendar week. After 1 year of immunotherapy, you may reduce your injection frequency to a minimum of once a month. You may come a maximum of once every calendar week during the maintenance phase. It is recommended that you continue your allergy injections for 3-5 years to complete therapy. Please note: If there are more than 35 days between your injections while on maintenance, your dose will need to be lowered. Also, when new vials are mixed they are more potent, therefore we must lower your dose to 0.3mL of Red, then 0.4mL of Red next, and finally back to 0.5mL of Red. You will need to come once weekly for those 3 doses to build back up to the maintenance dose.

### MANDATORY 30-Minute Wait After Shots

For your safety, all injection patients must wait inside our office building for 30 minutes after receiving their allergy shots. Anaphylaxis can occur at any dose, including maintenance, even if you have never had any prior reactions. Patients who leave the office before their 30-minute wait is over will have their immunotherapy terminated after the 3rd offense.

### Shot Reactions

Reactions to your allergy injections are significantly reduced by taking an antihistamine at least 30 minutes prior to your injections. It is normal to experience mild itching, redness and swelling and/or bruising at the injection site. If swelling occurs, ice may be applied to the injection site as well as hydrocortisone/Benadryl cream. Notify us at your next allergy injection visit if you experience any of these symptoms. Although most injection reactions occur within a 30-minute wait period, reactions can occur several hours after the allergy injection is received. If your reaction includes itching/hives/redness in areas other than the injection site, or any respiratory problems, call our office immediately. If it is after office hours, please go to the nearest emergency room or urgent care center. **If you develop a severe asthma attack, have difficulty breathing, dizziness, and/or swelling of the throat, use epinephrine and call 911.**

## **Antihistamines and Medication**

You must take your antihistamines (Allegra/fexofenadine, Zyrtec/ cetirizine, Pepcid/famotidine) as prescribed *the day of* your allergy injections, at least 30 minutes prior to the injections, to reduce the chance of anaphylaxis. If an antihistamine is given in our office, patients must wait 30 minutes before they are able to receive the injections, and then must wait the additional 30 minutes required after the injection is received. Highland Clinic will not stay open late to account for this 1 hour wait time if you did not take your antihistamines prior to arrival, so please plan accordingly. Always continue all medications as prescribed while you are on allergy immunotherapy.

## **Fragrance**

Please refrain from wearing scented body products when coming in for your allergy injections. Many of our patients are allergic to fragrances and we do our best to maintain a fragrance-free office.

## **Illness/Asthma Symptoms**

If you are having severe respiratory symptoms, NOTIFY THE PROVIDER prior to your allergy injections. If you continue to have uncontrolled asthma, please call our office to make an appointment with your Highland Clinic, APMC physician.

## **Beta Blockers**

If you start taking beta blocking medications (metoprolol, carvedilol, atenolol, etc.) it is critical that you inform us before getting your allergy injections. These medications are prescribed for heart disease, high blood pressure, headaches, glaucoma, etc. and may decrease sensitivity to medications used to treat anaphylaxis. You must wait at least 4 hours after your allergy shots to take your beta blocking medications.

## **Reordering Your Extract**

Extract vials expire one year from the date they are prepared, or when a component in the vial expires, whichever date comes first. It is important that you and the injection nurse take note of this date. You will be asked to sign a reorder authorization form approximately one month before the expiration date. If you have not had an office visit with your Highland Clinic, APMC allergy provider for over 12 months, you will need to make an appointment to be seen before the extract can be remade.