



STUDENT HEALTH



UNIVERSITY OF IOWA STUDENT HEALTH
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Allergy Nurse questions: 319-335-8365

INSTRUCTIONS FOR ALLERGY (IMMUNOTHERAPY) PATIENTS

First of all, thank you for choosing Student Health for your allergy shot care. Student Health administers allergy shots (immunotherapy) as a service to our students, and they appreciate the convenience of maintaining their allergy shot schedule while on campus. Here is some important information which will help you through the process.

Scheduling your first visit:

1. Schedule an appointment with a Student Health physician prior to receiving your allergy shots with us.
2. Please ask your allergist to complete the Physician Information Letter: <https://studenthealth.uiowa.edu/assets/384e59a62a/allergy-physician-letter.pdf>

We must receive this form prior to your first appointment with us. You can fax it or bring it to your appointment.

3. Your physician appointment with us can be scheduled any time before your allergy shots are due. You can schedule an appointment with the allergy shot clinic immediately after your physician appointment if you need a shot that day.

At your first visit with us:

1. Our physician will review your medical history, allergies, current medications, and your allergist's plan of care.
2. You will be asked to sign consent forms to receive allergy injections with us, and give us consent to obtain and/or release medical information to your allergist.
3. Our physicians are qualified to supervise allergy injections given on a schedule as determined by your allergist. However, we are not allergy physicians. As a result, all allergy testing, mixing of extracts, allergy shot instruction, and the very first allergy shot MUST be done by your local allergist.
4. We will store your allergy extracts in our temperature-monitored refrigerator. Our experienced nurses will administer your allergy shots under a physician's supervision, and provide emergency treatment in the rare case of a reaction to your allergy shots.

Fees:

There is a fee for each allergy visit. The allergy extract administration fee may be billed to your health insurance, charged to your U-Bill, or paid in cash. If you have questions about whether charges will be covered by your insurance, please contact your insurance company directly at their phone number on the back of your card.

**Allergy Clinic Hours - by appointment only: Monday through Thursday: 8:15-11:00 AM, and 1:00-4:00 PM;
Friday 9:45-11:00 AM, and 1:00-4:00 PM**

Appointment Procedure

1. You may schedule your appointment in several ways:
 - Use MyChart to schedule your appointment online: <https://mychart.uihealthcare.org/mychart/>
 - b) Call (319) 335-8394 during business hours.
 - c) Stop by our reception desk schedule in person.

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2. You may schedule appointments for the entire semester or one at a time, according to your preference.
3. Allow 45 minutes for each appointment. Medications, drug allergies, and health status are reviewed at each visit.
4. Please check in at the reception desk before every appointment to verify your demographic and insurance information.
5. **Please show your UNEXPIRED Epi-pen to the allergy nurse prior to receiving your injection that day.** This helps protect you in the rare event of a delayed severe/systemic reaction after you leave our clinic. If you do not have an Epi-Pen, our physician will write you a prescription for one. Students who do not have their Epi-Pen with them will need to reschedule their appointment.
6. **For your safety, all patients are required to wait at least 30 minutes** after injections and to check out with the allergy nurse before leaving the clinic. The nurse will inspect the injection site and record any local reaction. If you have a history of adverse reactions, you may be asked to wait longer.
7. Avoid strenuous activity and alcohol use just before and 2 hours following an injection. These activities may increase blood circulation and cause more of the allergy extract to enter the bloodstream, increasing your chances of a serious allergic reaction.
8. Do not interrupt your allergy shot schedule for a minor illness, mild cold symptoms, or because you took anti-allergy medications. If you are feeling ill on the day of your allergy visit, please inform the allergy nurse. If you have any questions about whether you can receive your injection, call the allergy nurse at 319-335-8365 or Nurse Line at 319-335-9704 to discuss your concerns.

Contacting your Allergist

We may need to contact your allergist to clarify or adjust dosages, or to request additional information. If a new order is needed, we require these orders be signed by your allergist and faxed to us, or we must speak with the allergist directly on the telephone. We **CANNOT** receive telephone verbal orders from the nurse or office staff. In some cases, this may cause an additional delay in receiving your allergy shots.

Missed Appointments

If you are unable to keep an appointment, please call as soon as possible. If you do not call by 8:00 AM on the day of your appointment, you will be assessed a \$15.00 charge. Call (319) 335-8394 anytime to cancel. If you reach voice mail, please leave a message. The date and time are automatically recorded with the message.

Keep in mind that the success and effectiveness of your immunotherapy program depends on you following to your allergist's recommended schedule as much as possible.

Allergy Shot Reactions

Some local reaction (itching, redness, and swelling) at the injection site is common. Make sure to report any reaction to the allergy nurse. If any local reaction is noted at the site, you will be given instructions regarding treatment. The nurse will follow your allergist's guidelines for future dosage adjustments.

Severe reactions are much less common than local reactions, but they require immediate treatment, as they can be life-threatening. These may occur within the first 30 minutes of an allergy injection, but they can also begin several hours after your shots.

- Signs and symptoms of severe/systemic reactions may include:
 - Any symptom that occurs at a location other than the injection site(s), including itching, rash, or hives
 - Sudden onset of frequent sneezing
 - Sudden onset of moderate to severe nasal congestion
 - Chest congestion, difficulty breathing, wheezing
 - Swelling of the lips, tongue or throat
 - Abdominal symptoms: cramping, vomiting, or diarrhea
 - Light-headedness, dizziness, passing out

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Any student who has a severe/systemic reaction while in our clinic will be treated promptly (with Epi-Pen and/or other emergency drugs) and possibly referred to the UIHC Emergency Department for further evaluation. We can only continue your shots after a consultation with your allergist and approval from our physician.

If you experience a severe/systemic reaction after you leave our clinic:

- **Use your Epi-Pen**
- **Go to the nearest Emergency Room, or call 911 for an ambulance**
- **Notify your allergist AND our allergy nurse at 319-335-8365 or 319-335-9704 if you experience a severe or systemic reaction. Your allergist may require an evaluation before you receive more injections. We will require updated instructions from your allergist and approval from our physician before proceeding with future injections in our clinic.**

A special note about “Beta Blocker” medications

You should not take “beta-blocker” medications (Propranolol, Atenolol, Inderal, Labetalol, Lopressor, Metoprolol, others) while receiving allergy shots, because they can block the effects of epinephrine (Epi-Pen), which you may need to treat a severe reaction to your allergy shots.

Beta-blockers are used for many medical conditions: high blood pressure, chest pain, heart arrhythmias, heart attacks, heart failure, alcohol withdrawal, anxiety states, hyperthyroidism, tremor, migraine headache prevention, bleeding from liver disease, and others. Beta-blockers eye drops are often used for conditions such as glaucoma and ocular hypertension.

Please talk with our nurse or physician if you are unsure if any of your medications are considered a “beta-blocker”. Your allergist and our physician would need to approve the use of this medication prior to receiving allergy injections with us.

Academic Breaks

If your schedule requires an injection during a period of time when you are away from campus:

1. Notify an allergy nurse so that you may pick up your allergy extracts and instructions. Make plans to safely store and refrigerate your extracts (do not freeze).
2. You may transport your own allergy extracts to Student Health, however you are responsible for maintaining them as recommended by your allergist (proper temperature, sterility, storage conditions, etc). Student Health is not responsible for adverse effects from improperly maintained/transported extracts, and cannot verify their safety.
3. When you return to campus, bring your refrigerated extracts, instructions and documentation. This should include injection dates, dosages given, and signature of the physician or nurse who administered the injections.

Annual Influenza Vaccine

We strongly recommend you receive an annual flu shot while getting allergy shots. Allergy patients are more likely to get the flu, which can be severe or rarely, life-threatening. You can get a flu shot at our clinic.

Disclaimers

Allergy shots always have some risk of a potentially serious or life-threatening allergic reaction that cannot always be easily predicted. We administer allergy shots according to your allergist’s instructions, and so you and your allergist are ultimately responsible for the safety of your regimen.

You may transport your own allergy extracts to our clinic. However, you are responsible for maintaining the extracts as recommended by your allergist (maintaining proper temperature, sterility, storage conditions, etc.). We cannot be responsible for reactions or adverse effects from improperly maintained allergy extracts, and cannot verify their safety.

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Student Health reserves the right to decline to administer allergy shots to any student who:

- Has a perceived higher than average risk for a severe/systemic reaction to immunotherapy.
- Does not follow our clinic instructions/requirements for receiving allergy shots, including leaving prior to the required 30 minute waiting period following allergy injections.
- Is chronically late for allergy shots.
- Is not a good candidate for allergy shots, according to the medical judgement of our physician.

Thank you for allowing us to participate in your care.