

**Ask your vet for  
further information**

**Successful management of your pet's allergy requires a special partnership with your veterinary surgeon. Progress may be slow and at times frustrating and you will have to comply with treatment schedules but the benefits to your pet's quality of life will be worth the journey...**

One example is Ben a Jack Russell Terrier. Each month his owner takes him to the vet for his "allergy shot", but in summer when the pollen count is high he sometimes needs some extra tablets such as a low dose steroid or an antihistamine. Ben also has a vinyl dog bed in the garden to lie in as he is allergic to grass pollen and he is kept in the house when the lawn is mown. He is no longer allowed to sleep in the bedroom as he is also allergic to house dust mites, and there is a strict regime of checking for/treating house dust mites so that they can never build up too much in the carpets and furniture. Thankfully he has a soft fabric dog bed in the kitchen but it has to be washed regularly. Ben is now much more comfortable - he still has bouts of scratching but his skin and coat is now healthy and shiny.



PRACTICE STAMP

PO Box 612  
York  
YO1 1EE

**Telephone: 0800 8494 550**

[www.animal-allergy.com](http://www.animal-allergy.com)  
[info@animal-allergy.com](mailto:info@animal-allergy.com)



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## Immunotherapy



# Immunotherapy



## What is Immunotherapy?

Immunotherapy (hyposensitisation or desensitisation treatment) is an effective veterinary medical treatment available to pets suffering from allergies.

It is one of the safest and most effective treatments for allergy and unlike other therapies it actually targets the root cause of the allergy and provides long term relief from the symptoms.

## How does Immunotherapy Treatment work?

Immunotherapy works by gradually building up your pet's immunity or tolerance to the specific allergens that are causing the allergic reaction. Over a period of time small amounts of the allergens are injected under the skin at the scruff of the neck. The injections are administered in increasing amounts and concentrations until a tolerance / maintenance level is reached. This constant but low level exposure allows your pet to build up its immunity to those allergens.

## How often does my pet need injections?

The initial injections are given every few days, this is then decreased to weekly and eventually to monthly "allergy shots".

## What are the risks?

As with any medication there can be adverse reactions, but these are rare. Sometimes a mild itching or redness is seen 24 to 48 hours after the injection. If you do see anything unusual in your pet's symptoms or behaviour after treatment contact your vet immediately.



Immunotherapy is often recommended because prolonged use of certain medications, especially steroids, reduces symptoms such as itching, but produces serious side-effects which may decrease the quality and length of your pet's life.

## How much Immunotherapy Treatment is required?

Each treatment is tailor-made to the individual requirements of your pet in licensed sterile laboratories, providing you with the assurance of safety and quality. The formulation



is based upon your pet's allergy test results, clinical history and the relevance of the allergens in the local environment.

Each individual treatment is licensed by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (DEFRA) and can only be prescribed by a veterinary surgeon.

It may not be necessary to include every allergen that was positive on the test result. Your

veterinary surgeon will select the most

relevant to the environment where you live and also the dominant allergens from the grass, tree, weed, mould and insect groups.

## How long does treatment take?

Immunotherapy is a proven effective treatment for allergies. However, every animal is unique and will respond differently to the treatment. In most cases improvements can be seen after a few months, but some animals may require more time before their immunity is built up enough to tolerate the offending allergens. Other factors such as severity and duration of the symptoms, age and general health of your pet will affect the timescale for improvement.

## How successful is Immunotherapy Treatment?

Studies show that 70-80% of animals respond positively to immunotherapy. Most animals will require this treatment for life as allergies cannot be cured only managed effectively. Although in some cases the animal becomes permanently desensitised so the injections can be stopped. The main criteria for success is - if the treatment is working, continue with the monthly allergy shots!

## What if my pet shows no improvement?

After 10 months your vet will review the situation and decide whether to proceed with the injections. It may be necessary to review the dosage levels / frequency, review other treatments and ensure that other infections are not complicating the allergic disease. Sometimes it may be necessary to perform another course of injections and review after further treatment.

## Are other treatments necessary?

It is highly recommended that symptoms are controlled by a combination of immunotherapy and a suitable allergy management regime to reduce exposure to allergens in the environment. At times it may also be necessary to use veterinary medications especially at the

height of the pollen season. If the

food allergy test was positive

then appropriate dietary changes will also need to be made.



Finally, any underlying infections (fungal, bacterial, parasitic) must also be treated - your vet will advise on any other treatments required.