

Sublingual (Under the Tongue) Prescription Tablet Immunotherapy What You Need To Know

What is it?

Sublingual immunotherapy, or SLIT, is a form of immunotherapy that involves taking a tablet of allergen extracts under the tongue. It is an alternative treatment to allergy injections. The FDA has approved three sublingual tablets for prescription use in the United States: Grastek, Ragwitek, and Oralair.

What are the benefits?

- SLIT can be effective to reduce symptoms of allergic rhinitis and conjunctivitis and reduce the need for medications that would otherwise be used for symptom control.
- SLIT can be administered at home.
- Needle injections are avoided.

How do I get started?

- This form of therapy requires commitment to taking a medication daily for months at a time. If you think you are up for the commitment and if approved by your CAAC provider, a prescription will be provided to you to take to your pharmacy. The cost is approximately \$8-10 per tablet. Insurance coverage is variable. The first dose is given under supervision in the office, and there is a 30 minute wait to monitor for any reactions.
- If there are no reactions the remaining doses can be taken at home as directed by your physician.

How to take and handle the medication:

- Handle tablet with dry hands.
- Place the tablet under the tongue. Allow it to remain there until completely dissolved. Do not swallow for at least 1 minute. Do not take tablet with food or beverage. Food or beverage should not be taken for the following five minutes after taking the tablet.
- For children administer under adult supervision
- Wash hands after handling the tablet.

What else do I need to know?

- The allergy tablet is taken daily for several months. Treatment usually starts about 12 weeks before the trouble season and is to be continued through the end of the season. You will be instructed on when to start and stop therapy at your first visit.
- Store at controlled room temperature 20°C-25°C (68°F-77°F); excursions permitted between 15°C-30°C (59°F-86°F). Store the tablets in the original package until use to protect from moisture.
- Although serious reactions to the tablet are not common, as they can occur you will be prescribed an epinephrine auto-injector and will be instructed on its use.
- A follow up visit is scheduled 8 weeks after starting immunotherapy.

What are common side effects/adverse reactions?

- Itching of the mouth/tongue
- Throat irritation, oral pain.
- Itching of the ear
- Swelling of the mouth
- Cough

If you experience any of these symptoms halt therapy and let your CAAC provider know.

What do I do if I miss a dose?

- If you miss less than 7 days of therapy- restart treatment at home. If more than 7 doses are missed the next dose will need to be administered in the office under supervision with a 30 minute wait to monitor for reactions.

When do I halt therapy?

- At the end of the season as instructed by the provider.
- If you develop any oral inflammation-ulcers/fungal infections (thrush) or oral wounds, or undergo dental procedure/oral surgery, continuation of therapy is deferred until the oral cavity is healed.
- Reactions to the medication.
- New onset or worsening heartburn symptoms, difficulty swallowing or persistent abdominal pain.
- If you have a fever, respiratory tract/ gastrointestinal tract infection, worsening asthma symptoms.

If any of these occur stop therapy and call our office for instructions.

Pregnancy

If you become pregnant during therapy, hold therapy, inform your CAAC provider, and set up an office visit to discuss continuation of therapy during pregnancy.