

## Oral Immunotherapy (OIT) General Information

### What is it?

Oral immunotherapy, or OIT, is a form of immunotherapy that involves taking small doses of an allergenic food daily. This process does not cure the food allergy but allows an individual to gradually be desensitized to the food and tolerate it in their diet. The food must be eaten daily in order to maintain this desensitized state. This type of oral immunotherapy has been documented for over 100 years in medical literature. However, recent studies and interest have made this type of therapy more mainstream. At this time, it is not currently approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in United States, and may not be a covered benefit by health insurances.

### What are the benefits?

- OIT can be effective in children to reduce the likelihood of symptoms with accidental exposure of allergenic foods.
- Some individuals may be able to consume food freely in their diet.
- After completing the initial dose escalation day and “up-dosing” (gradually increasing servings as directed by a physician), OIT can safely be administered at home.

### How do I get started?

- Patient and family are committed to adhere to protocol and visits.
- An appointment will be scheduled for the desensitization process. The first day will be the longest (up to 4 hours). We will start with very small amount of food protein and slowly build with a goal of 5 doses followed by a 60-minute observation period.
- There will be additional visits every 2 weeks while “up-dosing” to maintenance dose. After receiving a dose in the office, there is a one-hour observation period after each dose to monitor for any reactions.

### What else do I need to know?

- Home dose must be taken daily, we encourage morning dosing.
- Dose may need to be adjusted with illnesses, asthma, allergies, and menses.
- Allergy and asthma medications should be continued as prescribed.
- Exercise should be avoided for 2 hours after dosing. Dosing should not be given immediately after exercising.
- Dose should not be given on an empty stomach.

### What are common side effects/adverse reactions?

- We are administering an allergenic food. Although associated symptoms are typically mild, there is a risk for a severe life-threatening allergic reaction.
  - Itching of the mouth/tongue
  - Throat irritation
  - Runny nose
  - Cough
  - GI: nausea, heartburn, vomiting, stomach pain
  - Hives
  - Anaphylaxis
  - **Eosinophilic esophagitis is a rare but potential consequence of OIT.** Incidence is approximately 3% and typically resolves with discontinuation of therapy.
- **If any of these symptoms occur, hold therapy and call our office for instructions.**
- **If symptoms are concerning for a systemic reaction, follow instructions detailed in anaphylaxis plan. Call your provider after appropriate medications have been administered.**

### What do I need to purchase?

- KEEGH High-Precision Digital Milligram Pocket Scale 50g / 0.001g Reloading, Jewelry Scale (available on Amazon.com for about \$20). This scale will be used starting with up-dosing number 2 (week 5). You will weigh crushed whole peanuts on this scale.
- A large bag of **roasted** peanuts in their shell.

### How much will this cost?

- **Insurance coverage is variable. Co-pays, deductibles, coinsurance, are patient's responsibility for the visit or other charges.**
- Please contact your insurance company regarding coverage information. The procedure codes your insurance may need are 95076 and 95079.
- The cost of this procedure is approximately \$350 – \$500 for the initial visit. The up-dosing visits might range from \$355-\$525.

### Missed Appointments

- If you miss or cancel an appointment without 24 hours' notice, you may be charged a fee of \$75.00