

## Sublingual Immunotherapy (Allergy Drops)

### Patient Information

While the symptoms of allergic rhinitis may be reduced by avoiding the triggering allergen and/or anti-allergy medication(s), the only known cure of allergic rhinitis is immunotherapy. Allergy shots have proven to be effective and remain standard treatment at our practice and throughout the country.

An alternate method of immunotherapy (sublingual immunotherapy or SLIT) works by placing allergy drops under the tongue. Extensive studies have proven this method to be very safe and effective with results close or equal to standard injections. In fact, SLIT is now more common in Europe than injections.

Both methods are based on the same principle: controlled exposure to extracts over time changes the immune response, reducing or eliminating the abnormal allergic response in the vast majority of patients.

Diablo Valley ENT is now offering sublingual immunotherapy as an alternative treatment for those patients whom immunotherapy is recommended but are unable to tolerate or complete a regular injection schedule.

Allergy drops are used at home on a daily basis, placed under the tongue for 1 minute, then swallowed. The dosage is increased over a few months to reach full strength. Most patients will begin to experience significant reduction in symptoms within 6 months although 3 years of treatment is recommended to obtain maximal benefit. Side effects are unusual and mild, usually irritation under the tongue that requires no treatment. No serious side effects such as anaphylaxis have been reported. An office visit every 3 months during treatment is required.

Although studies are currently being done through our office and other centers in the country, SLIT is not yet a FDA approved treatment method. **Insurance will cover office visits and allergy testing but will not cover the cost of the allergy drops.** Our supplier has extensive experience as a worldwide producer of both injectable and sublingual extracts. We are now able to provide customized allergy drops based on patient specific testing at a cost of \$15.00/allergen treated.

Please contact our office for additional information at 925-933-8462.