



This sheet gives you information about immunotherapy, also known as allergy shots. Your child's allergy provider (called an allergist) has recommended that your child have allergy shots.

What are allergy shots?

Allergy shots are a series of shots that are given on a regular basis for 3–5 years. These shots help to lessen your child's allergy symptoms.

Who gives the allergy shots?

An allergy nurse gives the shots. The allergist is available if there is any cause for concern.

How often should my child get allergy shots?

- Your child can get about 1–4 allergy shots a week for 10–12 months. Each week, the dose gets stronger.
- After about 10–12 months, your child will move to "maintenance" allergy shots. Your child will get these shots every 2–4 weeks for the next 3–5 years, or as decided by your child's allergist.
- The number of allergy shots and how often they are given depends on how your child reacts to the shots.
- It is important to keep all of your child's appointments and stay on schedule in order for the shots to work. If your child misses 2 or 3 shots, it can slow down the treatment.

If your child is sick on the day of a scheduled allergy shot, please call the Allergy Program at 617-355-6117 to reschedule. Your child cannot have an allergy shot when sick.

How should I get my child ready for an allergy shot?

- Dress your child in a loose-fitting short sleeve T-shirt.
- Give your child all of the medications prescribed by the allergist.
- Give your child an antihistamine such as loratadine, cetirizine or fexofenadine the day before, the day of, and the day after the shot, as told by the doctor or nurse.
- Tell your child in simple terms why the shots are needed and what happens. Some things you may want to say:
 - I will be with you during the shot.

- You will need to keep your arm very still.
- You may bring a favorite toy or blanket into the room.

You must bring your child's epinephrine auto-injector to every appointment. If you do not have your epinephrine auto-injector, the shots cannot be given. The appointment will be rescheduled.

Where do we go for the allergy shots?

- Go to the Allergy Program. We have locations at our Boston main campus and at our Waltham, Lexington, Weymouth, North Dartmouth and Peabody satellites. Please speak with the allergy nurse about available locations.
- After getting an allergy shot, you and your child must stay in the Allergy Program waiting room for 30 minutes. This is so we can watch for any reactions. Reactions are most likely to happen during this time.

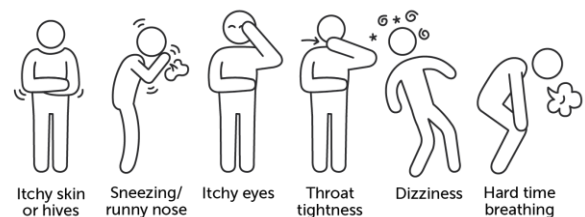
You must stay with your child in the waiting room after the allergy shot.

What is a reaction?

There are 2 kinds of reactions:

- **Local reactions** may cause itching, pain and swelling at the injection site. The reaction may look like a large, red bug bite.
- **Systemic reactions** are not as common and can be serious. These reactions need immediate treatment.

Signs of a serious reaction are:



Contact us right away if your child is not feeling well after the allergy shot.

What should I do if my child has a reaction in the waiting room?

Tell the nurse or allergist right away if your child has a reaction or is "not feeling right." The allergist may give your child medicine to help stop the reaction.

What should I do once my child and I get home?

Your child **should not exercise or play sports for 2 hours after getting the allergy shot.** Doing these activities may raise the risk of an allergic reaction and make the reaction stronger.

What should I do if my child has a reaction at home?

If your child has a local reaction to the allergy shot on the way home or at home:

- Place an ice pack or cold compress on the area where the shot was given to help with swelling or discomfort.
- Raise the arm your child had the shot in. You can prop it up on a pillow.
- **Do not let your child rub or scratch the area.**
- Give your child an antihistamine if necessary. An example of an antihistamine is diphenhydramine (Benadryl). Follow the directions on the package exactly. Call your doctor or pharmacist to explain any part you do not understand.
- Write down a list of your child's reactions.
- If your child does not get better or you are concerned, call the Boston Children's page operator at 617-355-6363 and ask to speak to the allergist on call.

Give an epinephrine (EpiPen) injection if your child has trouble talking, breathing or hives. Call 911 right after you do this.

- **If your child has a systemic reaction,** go to the hospital closest to you. Then, call Boston Children's page operator or at 617-355-6363. Ask to speak to the allergist on call.

When should I call my child's allergy nurse or allergist?

You can always call your child's allergy nurse or allergist if you have questions or concerns. You should call as soon as possible if:

- Your child has any reaction to an allergy shot
- Your child has not had allergy shots for a long time
- You are not sure if you should bring your child in for an allergy shot because he or she has been sick

Contact us

- **Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.:** Call the Allergy Program at 617-355-6117.
- **After 4:30 p.m., on weekends and holidays:** Call 617-355-6369 to speak with the allergist on call.

This Family Education Sheet is available in [Arabic](#) and [Spanish](#).