

FAIRFIELD COUNTY ALLERGY, ASTHMA & IMMUNOLOGY ASSOCIATES, P.C.

ADULT AND PEDIATRIC ALLERGY, ASTHMA AND CLINICAL IMMUNOLOGY

DIPLOMATES OF THE AMERICAN BOARD OF ALLERGY & IMMUNOLOGY

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VENOM IMMUNOTHERAPY
(Desensitizing Injections)

The series of injections you will be receiving is called “venom immunotherapy”. For a period of six weeks, the injections will be weekly and consist of increasing amounts of one or more of the insect venoms. The different venoms are: honeybee, mixed vespids (yellow jacket, yellow hornet and white hornet) and polistes (wasp). The venoms which you receive are those which were positive on skin testing. The first week’s dose of each venom is equivalent to 1/500th of a real sting; the sixth week’s dose of each venom is equivalent to approximately two stings. After seven weeks, the maintenance injections are progressively spaced until they are given every six weeks.

During the initial phase of the therapy, all the usual insect precautions (such as avoidance and the Epi-Pen) should be continued. We are unsure of the state of “protection” until after eight weeks of therapy.

Reactions at the site of the injections occur in some patients and can occur anytime during the course of therapy; i.e., during the initial phase or after maintenance therapy has been established. These “local reactions” consist of redness, swelling and/or warmth and may last from several minutes to several days. They may begin either immediately after the injection or not until several hours later. These reactions are best treated with local applications of ice to reduce the swelling, aspirin for pain and discomfort (Tylenol for children) and oral antihistamines to reduce the itching.

Rarely, a systemic reaction may follow a venom injection. If one should occur, it is usually very mild and will occur immediately after the injection. An adrenalin injection will usually give prompt resolution. If the reaction occurs hours later and consists of hives only, an oral antihistamine (Benadryl) should be used. Any sign of respiratory distress, such as wheezing or tightness, should be treated immediately with adrenalin (Epi-Pen). You should then proceed to the nearest emergency room.

If at any time there are questions about treatment regimens or reactions, don’t hesitate to call the office at (203) 838 – 4034.