

## **AFTER THE TEST...WHAT'S NEXT?**

**When your allergy test is complete, you will get a list of your allergens, as well as suggestions on how to decrease your exposure to those allergens. These environmental measures are just as important as your allergy injections. The more consistent you are with your injections and environmental avoidance measures, the better results you are likely to get.**

**You will be mailed your vial(s) to your home. When you get the package, open it and read the material in detail. You will need to keep the extract under refrigeration.**

**Call our office and make an appointment to come in for a test dose of your extract. This appointment can be in any of our locations. Be sure to take the extract package to this appointment since necessary paperwork is included.**

**After your test dose, you will be instructed on proper injection technique. Prescriptions for syringes and Epipen will be sent to your pharmacy. Injections may be given once or twice weekly, but no more frequently than every 3 days.**

**You will increase the amount of each injection as detailed on the dosage sheet. If you have any local reactions (raised, itchy or red area at the site of the injection), make a note of the reaction on your dosage sheet. If you have a local reaction that is quarter-sized or larger, call our office and ask to speak with the allergy nurse. Do not take any more injections until you speak with our office.**

**When you take the first injection of 0.50cc, fill out the attached re-order card and mail it in. Telephone orders will not be accepted. Another vial of extract will be mixed that will be stronger in concentration, and it will be mailed to you. When you get your next vial, you will call for an appointment for another test dose. You may not take any injections from the new vial until you have come for a test dose.**

**When you come for the test dose, be sure to bring your old dosage sheet as well as your new package of extract. This will be scanned into your chart so Dr. Mongiardo can see where you are in your treatment.**

## **ALLERGY REACTIONS AND INJECTIONS**

**You may have heard of people who have a life-threatening reaction to certain foods, insect stings or medicines. They carry a pre-measured dose of epinephrine or adrenaline to administer in case of emergency. All of Dr. Mongiardo's patients who administer their injections at home must have an auto-injector of epinephrine.**

**The most common type of reaction concerning allergy injections is a local one. That is just a redness or swelling or itching at the injection site. Benadryl or another antihistamine can be taken if it itches. An ice pack can also help. Generally, no action is needed or taken. If you have a local reaction, call our office and inform the nurse who will talk with Dr. Mongiardo before you take any more injections.**

**The less common and more serious reaction is an anaphylactic reaction. Symptoms of this reaction may include: hives, swelling of the face, breathing difficulties, nausea or a drop in blood pressure. Emergency treatment with epinephrine usually reverses symptoms quickly.**

**If you experience difficulty breathing, hives, swelling of the mouth or throat, whether or not you have had an allergy injection, use your epinephrine. Complete and easy to read instructions are included in the box. Always followup with a call to 911. Tell the operator your symptoms and that you have used epinephrine.**

**The vast majority of epinephrine auto-injectors are never used. They expire and must be replaced. It is better to have it and not need it than to need it and not have it.**

**As always, if you have any questions or concerns, call the office.**

## **ANIMALS**

**Dogs, cats, rabbits, birds, gerbils, etc. are all potential allergens. If you test positive to your animal, the first step is to remove it from your bedroom. It's almost impossible to see improvement of symptoms if you continue sleeping with your pet.**

**The allergic component of the dog is the dander, or dry skin particles. Regular shampoos and brushing can help remove the hair and dander, so there is less to be shed throughout your home. Naturally, it's best if someone other than the allergic patient does the grooming.**

**With cats, the urine and saliva are the allergic agents. When cats groom themselves, the saliva sticks to the hairs, which then shed and contaminate your home. For this reason, it is also beneficial to bathe and groom your cat often.**

**The bottom line for pets is this: You would be better off not having any animals in your home at all. We realize that most people will not give up their pets. The best advice is to keep animals strictly out of the bedroom, and have your carpets steam cleaned. Vacuum frequently. And remember – even if you tested negative for animal dander, it is possible to be made sensitive to them at any time. New animals are not recommended.**

## **TOBACCO**

**There are two problem areas where tobacco is concerned. The first is the pollen, particularly in rural farming areas. If you test positive to tobacco pollen, avoidance is the only recourse. The FDA prohibits us from injecting a carcinogen into patients week after week, so we cannot add it to your extract.**

**Tobacco smoke is the other area of concern. As with tobacco pollen, we cannot add tobacco smoke to your extract. Avoidance is the only option. The smoke is an irritant to delicate nasal mucosa. If your nasal passages are already red, swollen and irritated from allergies, tobacco smoke just compounds the problem - even if you are not actually allergic to it. No tobacco use is advised for allergy patients. No second-hand smoke is advised. It is critical that asthmatic patients not be exposed to smoke. No symptom improvement should be expected with continued smoke exposure.**

## **HOUSE DUST**

**House dust is one of the most common airborne allergens. It is composed of dust mites, decomposing insect bodies, insect droppings, dry skin cells and other waste material. We emphasize dust control in the bedroom, as at least one third of your life is spent in that area. Symptoms caused by house dust usually peak after retiring for the night.**

**Polished floor coverings such as hardwood floors or linoleum are best. Wall to wall carpet retains humidity and promotes house dust and mold formation. Bedroom floors should be vacuumed at least twice weekly during initial six weeks of treatment and at least weekly thereafter. Vacuuming should be done by someone other than the allergic person, if possible.**

**No down or feather bedding should be used. Mattresses and all pillows on the bed, including decorative ones, should be covered with an allergen proof cover. These covers should zip up and completely cover the mattress. Most department stores or bed supply stores carry several types of allergen proof covers and several price ranges. Look for a label that says "hypo-allergenic dust mite proof" or "non-allergenic" or "for the allergy sufferer" or something similar, to indicate that it is allergen proof. Unfortunately, these covers aren't cheap, but they are one of the most effective barriers to dust mite exposure. Leave this zippered cover on. You can vacuum it when you change your sheets, but you don't need to wash it. Launder everything on top of the cover at least once a week in hot water. This includes blankets, comforters and quilted mattress pads. If your comforter or blanket doesn't fit in your washer, it's best to replace it with a washable one.**

**Shades are ideal window coverings. Mini-blinds are difficult to keep clean. Don't use heavy or un-washable drapes. Keep bedroom free of clutter and without bookshelves, collectibles, etc. Upholstered furniture should be kept at a minimum. Keep bedroom doors and windows closed at all times.**

**Children with allergies should keep stuffed animals to a minimum. They are ideal homes for dust mites. Have your child choose two or three favorites. Put the rest in a plastic garbage bag and store in another room. Run the chosen few through a hot dryer cycle once a week. The heat will kill the dust mites.**

# **MOLDS**

**Molds are another category of inhaled allergens. Mold spores, or fungi, grow in damp dark areas such as basements, attics, barns and riverside cottages.**

**Avoid sleeping in basements if you are allergic to molds.**

**Avoid wood burning stoves and fireplaces if possible. Firewood is a prime spot for mold growth. When the wood burns, the spores become airborne and are easier to breathe in. Real Christmas trees are also loaded with mold.**

**Bathrooms are a potentially moldy area. Use a cleanser with bleach to kill existing mold and to retard the growth of new mold.**

**It is also common for mold spores to proliferate around window sills and doors.**

**High concentrations of mold are also found in soil. Gardening and yard work can bring about mold-induced symptoms. Raking leaves is not recommended for the mold allergic patient. Symptoms that peak at sunset are often mold related.**

**Due to the high mold count in soil, house plants are not recommended, particularly in the bedroom.**

**Some foods aren't recommended due to a fermentation process or aging. These aren't actually food allergies, but mold allergies. Aged foods: cheddar, parmesan and blue cheese all contain mold as do country ham and salami.**

**Hard cider and vinegar-based foods can also be problematic. These include condiments like ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, salad dressing, pickles and olives.**

**Alcoholic beverages are also fermented.**

**It is recommended that you avoid all the above-listed foods if you are not feeling well. It is usually not necessary to completely eliminate them from your diet.**

# **POLLENS**

**Pollens are one of 3 major categories of inhalant allergies. There is little a patient can do to eliminate exposure. Avoidance is best. Stay indoors with AC during peak pollen seasons. Don't sleep with windows open. A High Efficiency Particulate Air Filter (HEPA) is an effective way to decrease the amount of pollens in a room.**

## **TREE POLLEN**

**Maple: Pollen is present before leaves unfold. Trees pollinate in KY in February, March, April and May. Once the leaves are unfurled, the pollen is mostly gone.**

**Oak: Prolific pollinators, with small, airborne pollen grains.**

**Mt. Cedar: Prolific pollinators**

**Tree Mix #1: A collection of many different trees**

**Tree Mix #2: A collection of many different trees**

## **GRASS POLLEN**

**KY Bluegrass: Common yard grass which produces widespread pollen. This grass is most active in May, June and July. This grass may continue to pollinate until the first frost due to forced growing conditions.**

**Meadow Fescue: Another common yard grass**

**Grass Mix #1: A collection of many different grasses**

**Grass Mix #2: A collection of many different grasses**

## **WEED POLLEN**

**Ragweed: Main allergenic plant in North America. It produces large quantities of small, buoyant pollen. It is found in every state in the US. It pollinates in KY from August until the first freeze.**

**Goldenrod: Larger pollen grains, but lots of them**

**Weed Mix #1: A collection of many different weeds**

**Weed Mix #2: A collection of many different weeds**