

SENSITEST

THE COMPLETE
ALLERGY SERVICE

Immunotherapy



TARGETING
THE ROOT
CAUSE OF
ALLERGY

INNOVATION IN
ANIMAL HEALTHCARE

 **Avacta**
ANIMAL HEALTH

WHAT IS IMMUNOTHERAPY?

Allergen-specific immunotherapy (hyposensitisation or desensitisation treatment) is an effective veterinary medical treatment available to pets suffering from allergies.

Available for dogs, cats and horses, it is one of the safest and most effective treatments for allergy and unlike other therapies it actually targets the root cause of the allergy and can provide long term relief from the symptoms.

HOW DOES ALLERGEN-SPECIFIC IMMUNOTHERAPY TREATMENT WORK?

Allergen-specific immunotherapy works by gradually building up your pet's tolerance to the specific allergens that are causing the allergic reaction. Over a period of time small amounts of the allergens are injected under the skin at the scruff of the neck or another location. The injections are administered in increasing amounts until a tolerance/maintenance level is reached. This constant but low level exposure allows your pet to build up its tolerance to those allergens.

HOW OFTEN DOES MY PET NEED INJECTIONS?

The initial injections are given every 2-3 weeks over a 12 week induction period. This then decreases to monthly "allergy shots". An example of the protocol is as follows:

- Week 1 – 0.2ml
- Week 3 – 0.4ml
- Week 5 – 0.6ml
- Week 7 – 0.8ml
- Week 10 – 1.0ml
- Week 13 – 1.0ml
- Maintenance dose – 1.0ml every four weeks thereafter



WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

As with any medication there can be adverse reactions, but these are uncommon. Sometimes a mild itching or redness is seen 24 to 48 hours after the injection. If you do see anything unusual in your pet's symptoms or behaviour after treatment contact your vet immediately.

HOW MUCH ALLERGEN-SPECIFIC IMMUNOTHERAPY TREATMENT IS REQUIRED?

Immunotherapy is often recommended because prolonged use of certain medications, especially steroids, reduce symptoms such as itching, but can produce serious side-effects which may decrease the quality and length of your pet's life.



Each treatment is tailor-made to the individual requirements of your pet in licensed sterile laboratories, providing you with the assurance of safety and quality. The formulation is based upon your pet's allergy test results, clinical history and the relevance of the allergens in the local environment. Each individual treatment can only be prescribed by a veterinary surgeon.

It may not be necessary to include every allergen that scored positive on the test result. Your veterinary surgeon will select those most relevant to the environment where you live and also the dominant allergens from the grass, tree, weed, mould and insect groups.

HOW LONG DOES TREATMENT TAKE?

Allergen-specific immunotherapy is a proven effective treatment for allergies. However, every animal is unique and will respond differently to the treatment. In most cases improvements can be seen after a few months, but some animals may require more time before their tolerance of the offending allergens is built up sufficiently. Other factors such as severity and duration of the symptoms, age and general health of your pet will affect the timescale for improvement.

HOW SUCCESSFUL IS IMMUNOTHERAPY TREATMENT?

Around 50-80%¹ of animals respond positively to immunotherapy. Most animals will require this treatment as part of their allergy management protocol for life. However, in some cases the animal becomes permanently desensitised so the injections can be stopped. The main criteria for success is – if the treatment is working, continue with the monthly allergy shots!

WHAT IF MY PET SHOWS NO IMPROVEMENT?

After 10 months your vet will review the situation and decide whether to proceed with the injections. It may be necessary to review the dosage levels/frequency and also assess other treatments currently being used in addition to checking for infections or parasite infestations that may be complicating the allergic disease. Sometimes it may be necessary to give another course of injections and review after further treatment.

ARE OTHER TREATMENTS NECESSARY?

It is highly recommended that symptoms are controlled by a combination of immunotherapy and a suitable allergy management regime to reduce exposure to allergens in the environment. At times it may also be necessary to use veterinary medications especially at the height of the pollen season. If the food allergy test was positive then appropriate dietary changes will also need to be made.

Finally, any underlying infections and infestations (fungal, bacterial, parasitic) must also be treated – your vet will advise on any other treatments required.

¹Jackson, H.A. and Mueller, R.S. Atopic dermatitis and adverse food reactions. In: *BSAVA Manual of Canine and Feline Dermatology, 3rd edn*, ed. H.A. Jackson and R. Marsella (2007), 130-140. BSAVA, Gloucester, UK.

To find out more about our immunotherapy treatment, visit animal-allergy.com

Successful management of your pet's allergy requires a special partnership with your veterinary practice. Progress may be slow and at times frustrating and you will have to comply with treatment schedules but the benefits to your pet's quality of life will be worth the journey...

CASE STUDY

HISTORY

Benji was six years old when he first developed itchy and irritated skin. He began to scratch himself quite badly and lost a lot of his beautiful golden coat. He also struggled to sleep as his skin was so painful. He was presented to his vet with generalised and widespread dermatitis. A blood sample was then sent to Avacta Animal Health for allergy testing.

ACTION

Benji's vet prescribed him a course of immunotherapy treatment as a result of his environmental test. The allergens included in his immunotherapy were carefully selected by his vet taking into account the test results and considering which grasses, weeds and trees Benji was exposed to on a regular basis. The treatment works by desensitising the animal's immune system to the offending allergen. It starts with several injections over the course of the first few weeks and is then reduced to monthly "allergy shots" which Benji has at the vets.

RESULT

Benji's symptoms started to improve almost immediately after starting his immunotherapy and within 8 months there was a total resolution. Benji is now much happier and his owner Lyn commented how the treatment had a really positive result as Benji can sleep (one of his favourite activities!) properly.



"Diagnosing and treating the specific underlying cause of Benji's skin problem has been completely successful. It has restored Benji to his happy, healthy self for which we are all very grateful."

Duncan Hole, Vet Surgeon, Swayne and Partners Veterinary Surgery

More examples can be found on our website animal-allergy.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
PLEASE VISIT OUR WEBSITE
AT **ANIMAL-ALLERGY.COM**

**OR ASK YOUR VET FOR
FURTHER INFORMATION**

"We are so pleased our
vet advised us of this
treatment because we have
a contented Westie now and
not one driven mad by the
itching and scratching."

Glenda, Corrie's owner

"I didn't realise how
much the problem
had affected Belle until
she was well again."

**Tracey, pet owner of
Border Collie, Belle**