

Relieving Allergies and Tailoring Care With Immunotherapy Drops



Questions & Answers



Immunotherapy drops for allergy control in your pet.

You and your veterinarian have elected to identify the cause of your pet's allergy through testing and to treat with immunotherapy drops. Allergies can be a frustrating and long-term problem for you and your pet. Be assured that with immunotherapy drops, your veterinarian is recommending a long-term, medically appropriate treatment for this important member of your family.

Immunotherapy is one of the safest, most effective long-term treatments for allergy. It is the only therapy that targets the root cause of allergic reactions, unlike other treatments that just mask signs. For immunotherapy drops to have the greatest chance of success, it is important that you understand what the process involves and what your role is in helping to manage your pet's allergic disease.

What are Heska Immunotherapy Drops?

Immunotherapy drops are a medical treatment where allergens (*e.g.*, pollen, dander, molds, mites) to which your pet is allergic are administered, under the tongue (sublingually). Using the specific results of the allergy test and detailed history, immunotherapy treatment is formulated to contain the specific allergens identified as causing allergic problems in your pet. Successful use of immunotherapy drops changes the immune system to become tolerant of those allergens. The goal of treatment with immunotherapy drops is to minimize the severity of clinical signs to keep your pet comfortable, as well as reduce reliance on immunosuppressive drugs.

How are the immunotherapy drops administered?

Immunotherapy drops contain precise quantities of allergens that are placed inside your pet's mouth, ideally beneath the tongue. Highly specialized cells

located in this area are responsible for “re-training” the immune system’s response to allergens, eventually resulting in tolerance and thus a reduction of allergic signs. A small volume is administered from a specially designed pump that makes it easy to place the drops under the tongue. The drops are given twice per day, once in the morning and once in the evening. Most pets find the taste to be very palatable, but it is important that the drops be given WITHOUT food or water. No food, treats or water should be given for 10 minutes following administration.

Are immunotherapy drops safe?

Reactions are very rare with immunotherapy drops. If any reaction is observed, it is generally some mild oral itching or irritation, which usually subsides within 5–10 minutes. (For pets that couldn’t tolerate immunotherapy when given as an injection, immunotherapy drops provide a very safe alternative.) For pets that did not have any significant improvement in their allergic signs with immunotherapy injections, immunotherapy drops may provide beneficial effects due to the different way they are administered.

How soon can I expect to see some improvement in my pet from immunotherapy drops?

Many patients will start to experience a reduction in their signs in the first 1–3 months of therapy. It is recommended that immunotherapy drops be continued for at least 10 months before deciding whether or not it is the best way to manage your pet’s allergies. Every pet’s allergy condition is unique. Therefore, regular re-evaluations or “re-checks” by your pet’s veterinarian (especially during the first year) are essential for achieving the best results.

Can my pet receive other medications while on immunotherapy drops?

Regular skin and coat care, particularly bathing, is an important part of managing your pet’s allergy. Your veterinarian may also prescribe other treatments such as antihistamines, fatty acids, medicated shampoos, rinses or sprays to help keep your pet

comfortable during the early stages of immunotherapy or during allergy season. Additionally, anti-inflammatory medications can also be used without interfering with immunotherapy drops.

How often will my pet require immunotherapy drops?

For maximum benefit, drops should be given twice daily, generally once in the morning and once in the evening, although it is not imperative that they be given at the same time every day. Because immunotherapy drops work differently than immunotherapy injections, it is possible that some patients may be able to eventually stop receiving the drops and still maintain good control over their allergic signs. This decision needs to be made with your veterinarian and would only be suggested after your pet has achieved full resolution of his/her signs for an extended period of time.

What if my dog or cat is not doing well on immunotherapy?

Some pets may not improve following treatment with immunotherapy drops. It is critical that you work closely with your veterinarian. Poor response may be due to secondary, often treatable, skin diseases such as yeast or bacterial infections, as well as flea infestations. In other cases, it may be necessary to change the contents or concentration of the drops. In selected cases, it may be beneficial to re-test your pet if it is suspected he/she has developed additional hypersensitivities.

Are there any other measures I can take to help my allergic pet?

The table on the back of this brochure outlines environmental control measures to help minimize your pet's exposure to certain allergens. Remember that many allergens are airborne, and you may be able to help your allergic pet by making some simple at home changes.

You can significantly help your allergic pet by making simple environmental changes.

ALLERGEN	AVOIDANCE SUGGESTIONS
House Dust Mites, Fleas	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wash bedding in hot water (over 130°F) weekly.• Avoid letting pet sleep on overstuffed furniture (Restrict access to bedrooms. If pet sleeps on human's bed, use barrier type covers on mattress/pillow).• Avoid stuffed toys.• Keep pet in uncarpeted rooms when possible.• Frequently damp mop in pet "holding" room.• Change furnace filters frequently and keep humidity to a minimum (30–50%) in the home.• Practice good flea control (consult with your veterinarian).
Molds, Storage Mites	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Keep pets out of damp basements.• Use dehumidifiers.• Avoid barns/feed storage areas.• Feed good quality pet food and store pet food in air-tight container.• Clean pet food storage areas and bins with chlorine bleach solutions.• Clean and disinfect humidifiers.• Avoid having large numbers of houseplants.• Avoid confining pets to rooms with high moisture levels (bathroom, basement, laundry room).• Prevent access to crawl spaces under house.
Pollen	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Avoid fields.• Keep grass cut short.• Rinse pet after exposure to high grasses/weeds.• Keep pet indoors at dusk and early morning during heavy pollen season.• Use air conditioners.• Keep pets indoors while mowing lawns.

