

Your immunotherapy management plan – Acarizax[®] or Grazax[®]

Name

Date of birth

Date

You have been prescribed the following treatment:

Sub-lingual immunotherapy

Name of medication	Amount	How often

Date I started my immunotherapy

You are on year of a 3-year treatment plan.

What is sublingual immunotherapy?

Allergic rhinitis (often known as hay fever) can significantly impact on sleep, home, and school performance, and can result in a substantially reduced quality of life.

Immunotherapy is recommended for patients over 5 years old who, despite allergen avoidance and trying maximal recommended medication, still have uncontrolled symptoms of rhinitis.

Sublingual immunotherapy involves a small dissolvable tablet being placed under the tongue each day. The tablets contain tiny amounts of either grass pollen or

house dust mites. The tablets help your immune system to build up a tolerance to the allergen. Immunotherapy is the only treatment which aims to treat the underlying cause of an allergy, rather than just the symptoms.

Immunotherapy has been shown to be effective in inducing long-term reduction in rhinitis symptoms. However, the treatment is taken over three years, so it is important that while you are taking the immunotherapy you still take your regular rhinitis medication. The aim is that by the end of the treatment programme the symptoms and reliance on medication have reduced.

Should I continue my regular rhinitis treatments while I'm taking immunotherapy?

Yes, it is important that you continue taking your regular anti-histamines, nasal spray, and eye drops. Immunotherapy treats the underlying causes of rhinitis, but it will not begin to treat your immediate symptoms until towards the end of the 3-year course.

How should you take the tablets?

Your tablets should be taken 'sub-lingually' which means that they are designed to be placed under the tongue where they dissolve.

1. Wash and thoroughly dry your hands
2. The tablet should be taken out of the blister card with dry fingers.
3. Lift up your tongue and place the tablet underneath your tongue. It should dissolve within a few seconds.
4. You should avoid swallowing for 1 minute, and avoid any food or drink for 5 minutes, after taking your tablet.



The tablet should be taken from the blister card with dry fingers



...placed under the tongue



...where it will dissolve within seconds



Swallowing should be avoided for 1 minute after taking the tablet.

Food and drink should be avoided for 5 minutes after taking the tablet.

Frequently asked questions

What should I do if a dose of immunotherapy is forgotten?

You may take your tablet later in the day if possible, but otherwise just continue with your normal once-a-day routine. Do not take a double dose to make up for a forgotten tablet. If the treatment was interrupted for more than one week, then you should tell your clinic as soon as you can.

What should I do if a tooth is lost or removed?

If you lose a tooth or have any type of dental surgery you should stop your immunotherapy treatment for seven days to allow the oral cavity to heal.

Should I continue my treatment on holiday?

Yes. Travel with your tablets in your hand luggage, and continue with your daily dosing regimen.

Should I continue taking my tablets if I am unwell?

If you have been prescribed antibiotics by your GP for an infection, if you have a temperature, an asthma attack or if you are unwell enough to be off school or college, you should stop taking your tablets until you are over the worst of the illness. If you have to stop taking your tablets for more than seven days, you should contact the allergy team so that they can tell you how to safely begin treatment again.

What should I do if I need a vaccination?

If you are having any vaccinations, such as for the flu, you should not take your immunotherapy on the day you have them. You should wait until any vaccine reactions have resolved completely before restarting your tablets.

What side effects are associated with this treatment?

The most common side effect is itching in the mouth. This is a temporary effect that starts after taking the tablet, and normally lasts for minutes to hours. After about a week of treatment, most patients no longer experience this.

Other, less common, side effects include itching of the ears, sneezing, throat irritation, swelling of the mouth, abdominal pain or nausea (feeling sick). As with itching of the mouth, these side effects mainly happen during the first week of treatment and do not last long.

If any of these symptoms continue after the first week of treatment, and are bothering you, you can take an antihistamine 1 hour before you administer your immunotherapy. This should help to reduce your symptoms.

If you experience side effects that get worse each day, beyond the first week of treatment, and do not improve with antihistamines, or if your asthma symptoms get worse while you are on this treatment, please contact the nursing team for further advice.

Please refer to the manufacturer's information leaflet for more information about possible side effects. You should contact your GP or seek medical attention immediately if you experience a more severe reaction.

How many appointments will I need?

It is important that the first sub-lingual immunotherapy tablet is given under medical supervision. This is to make sure that the tablet is taken correctly, so that you can be monitored for any reaction, and so that the treatment can be explained face to face. You will be given an initial 3-month supply of tablets.

You will continue your treatment at home, and you will be seen in clinic three months after you begin treatment for your first review. You will be given a further 6-month supply of tablets at this appointment.

You will then need to return every six months so the specialist can continue to monitor your response to treatment and to give you further supplies.

If you find yourself on your final box of tablets, and you do not have a clinic appointment booked, please email us, [e: SLIT@gstt.nhs.uk](mailto:SLIT@gstt.nhs.uk) so that we can arrange a small supply or book an appointment.

Further sources of information

Allergy UK Helpline, providing independent, confidential advice and support, [t: 01322 619898](tel:01322619898), Monday to Friday, 9am–5pm.

Contact us

If you have any questions regarding your prescribed immunotherapy treatment, you can contact the allergy nurses at Evelina London Children's Hospital, **t:** 020 7188 9783.

Alternatively you can book a telephone appointment with an allergy nurse specialist online at **w:** www.zesty.co.uk/practices/childrens-allergy-nurse-helpline

If you are running out of tablets and have not been given an appointment to see the allergy team, please email SLIT@gstt.nhs.uk

For more information leaflets on conditions, procedures, treatments and services offered at Evelina London, please visit, **w:** www.evelinalondon.nhs.uk/leaflets

NHS 111

Offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day.

t: 111 **w:** www.111.nhs.uk

Evelina London Medicines Helpline

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's medicines, please speak to the staff caring for them or contact our helpline. **t:** 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am-5pm, **e:** letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

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