

Your immunotherapy management plan – Oraltek[®]

Name

Date of birth

Date.....

You have been prescribed the following treatment:
Sublingual immunotherapy

Name of medicine	Amount (dose)	How often

You should start taking your immunotherapy from today

You are on year of a 3-year treatment plan

Sublingual immunotherapy

Allergic rhinitis (also known as hay fever) can seriously affect sleep, home, and school performance, and can result in a reduced quality of life.

Immunotherapy is recommended for patients 2 years of age and above who still have uncontrolled symptoms of rhinitis, even if they avoid allergens and have tried other recommended medicines.

The immunotherapy you have been prescribed is called Oraltek. It comes in a small bottle with a pump, designed to deliver sprays of the allergen under the tongue (sublingual). This will be either tree pollen, grass pollen or house dust mite. By taking a small dose (amount), you can build up a tolerance to the allergen.

Hopefully, this will reduce the symptoms of your allergic rhinitis.

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 reduce long-term rhinitis symptoms. However, the treatment is taken over 3 years, so it is important that while you are taking the immunotherapy you still take your regular rhinitis medicine. The aim is that by the end of the treatment programme, your symptoms are better and you do not need to take as much medicine to control them.

Taking an unlicensed medicine

Oraltek is not licensed in the UK. However, it is licensed for use in some other countries, and there is evidence that it works to treat this particular condition. You can read our information about **unlicensed medicines**. If you would like a copy, please ask your doctor, nurse or pharmacist. Or you can call the Pharmacy Medicines Helpline (details are at the end of this leaflet).

Continuing your regular rhinitis treatments while you're taking immunotherapy

It is important that you continue taking your regular antihistamines, nasal spray, and eye drops while you are taking immunotherapy. Immunotherapy treats the underlying causes of rhinitis, but it will not begin to reduce your rhinitis symptoms until towards the end of the 3 year-course.

How to take Oraltek

Your treatment should be taken 'sublingually'. This means that it is designed to be given under the tongue, where it is absorbed.

1. Food and drink in the mouth can affect how the treatment is absorbed. **Do not eat or drink, brush your teeth, or rinse your mouth** for 30 minutes before, or 30 minutes after you take Oraltek.
2. Wash and dry your hands
3. Rotate the nozzle sideways from a vertical to a horizontal position.
4. Lift up your tongue, place the end of the pump into the space under your tongue, and fully press the pump 2 times to deliver 2 sprays.
5. The liquid should remain under your tongue for 1 minute so that it can be absorbed. After this time, you can swallow.
6. **Do not do any strenuous exercise** for 1 hour before, or 1 hour after using your spray.



Side effects

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

Other, less common, side effects include:

- itching in the ears
- sneezing
- throat irritation
- mouth swelling
- tummy (abdominal) pain
- feeling sick (nausea)

These side effects usually 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 take your immunotherapy. This should help to reduce your symptoms.

After your first week of treatment, if you have side effects that get worse each day, 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 advice.

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

If you forget a dose

You can take your Oraltek spray later in the day if possible, but otherwise just continue with your normal routine of 2 sprays each day. **Do not** take a double dose to make up for a forgotten dose.

If the treatment was interrupted for more than 1 week, you should tell your clinic as soon as you can.

Losing a tooth

If you lose a tooth or have a tooth removed by your dentist, you should stop your immunotherapy treatment for 7 days to allow the oral cavity to heal.

If you go on holiday

You should continue with your treatment if you go on holiday. Travel with your immunotherapy in your hand luggage, and continue taking your treatment every day.

If you are unwell

You should stop taking your spray if you:

- have been prescribed antibiotics by your GP for an infection
- have a high temperature (fever)
- have an asthma attack
- are unwell enough to be off school or college

You can start taking Oraltek again when you feel well enough. If you have to stop taking Oraltek for more than 7 days, you should contact the allergy team, so that they can tell you how to safely begin treatment again.

If you need a vaccination

If you are having any vaccinations, such as for 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 immunotherapy.

Storing Oraltek

Any unopened bottles should be stored in the fridge (2C to 8C). Once a bottle is open, it can be stored out of the fridge, and can be used for up to 8 weeks, as long as it does not reach temperatures above 30C.

Appointments

An allergy specialist is the only person who can start your Oraltek treatment, this is done in our Allergy Day Case Unit.

Tree pollen only

Treatment needs to be started before the tree pollen season begins. This is usually in October, November or December. The appointment will last up to 1 hour.

Grass pollen only

Treatment needs to be started before the grass pollen season begins. This is usually in January or February. The appointment will last up to 1 hour.

Tree and grass pollen

If starting tree **and** grass pollen, you will start both treatments at the same visit. This is usually in October, November or December. For tree and grass pollen you will receive enough immunotherapy to last for your first year when you come in to start your treatment. Keep taking your treatment until the bottles run out. You will usually have a 3

or 4 month break before being invited to come and collect your next year's treatment from the hospital. You will start your second and third years of treatment at home. You will have a yearly follow-up clinic appointment by phone.

House dust mite

Treatment must be started outside of the house dust mite season. This is usually in the summer months, in our Allergy Day Case Unit. You will get a 6-month supply (2 boxes) of treatment at first. This treatment is taken each day throughout the year. As soon as you open your **second box** of Oraltek, you should email us (giving your name and date of birth) **email** SLIT@GSTT.nhs.uk This is because it can take up to 8 weeks to order from the manufacturer. You will have a yearly follow-up appointment by phone.

Support and more information

Allergy UK Helpline, provides independent, confidential advice and support, **phone** 01322 619898, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

Contact us

If you have any questions about your prescribed immunotherapy treatment, you can contact the allergy nurses at Evelina London **phone** 020 7188 9783

If you are running out of Oraltek, or need any support or advice from our specialist nursing team **email** SLIT@gstt.nhs.uk

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

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, **phone** 020 7188 3003, Monday to Friday, 10am to 5pm **email** letstalkmedicines@gstt.nhs.uk

Your comments and concerns

For advice, support or to raise a concern, contact our Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS), **phone** 020 7188 8801 **email** pals@gstt.nhs.uk.
To make a complaint contact the resolution department **phone** 020 7188 3514 **email** complaints2@gstt.nhs.uk

Language and accessible support services

If you need an interpreter or information about your care in a different language or format, please contact the department your appointment is with.

NHS 111

This service offers medical help and advice from fully trained advisers supported by experienced nurses and paramedics. Available over the phone 24 hours a day, **phone** 111 **web** www.111.nhs.uk

NHS website

This website gives information and guidance on all aspects of health and healthcare, to help you take control of your health and wellbeing, **web** www.nhs.uk



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