

WHY SEE AN ALLERGIST

Everything you need to know about the role of an allergist, allergy testing, and immunotherapy.



ALLERGY  PARTNERS®

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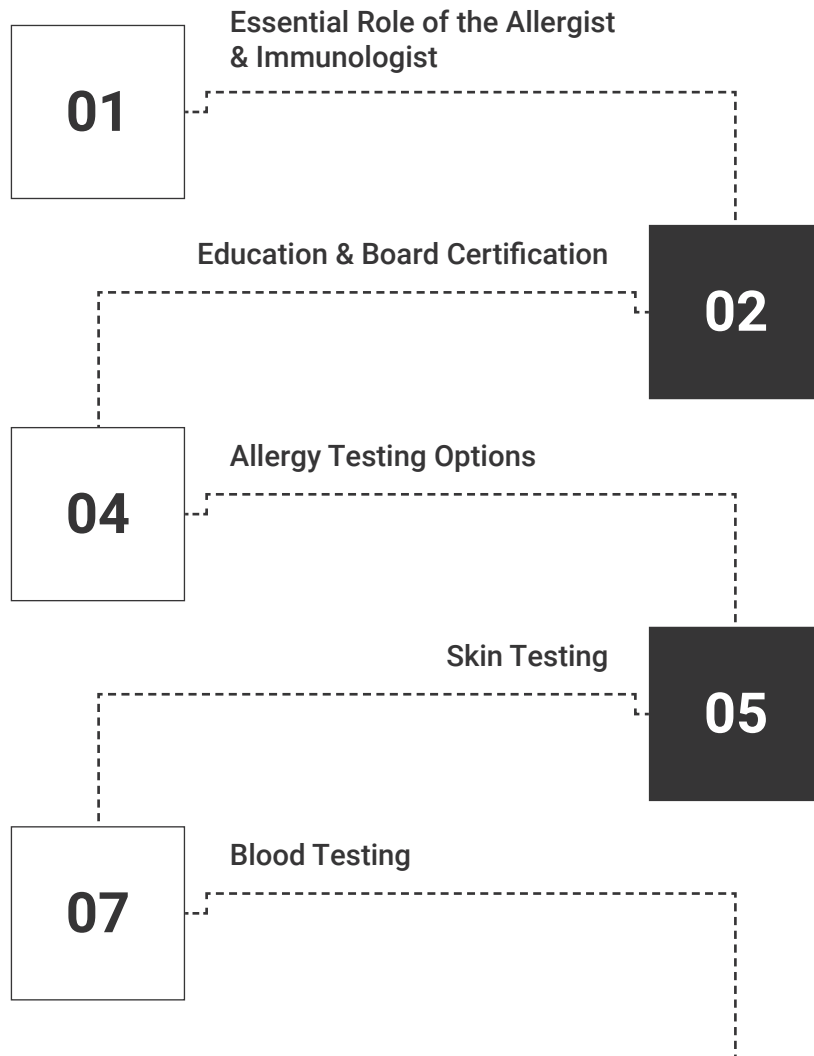
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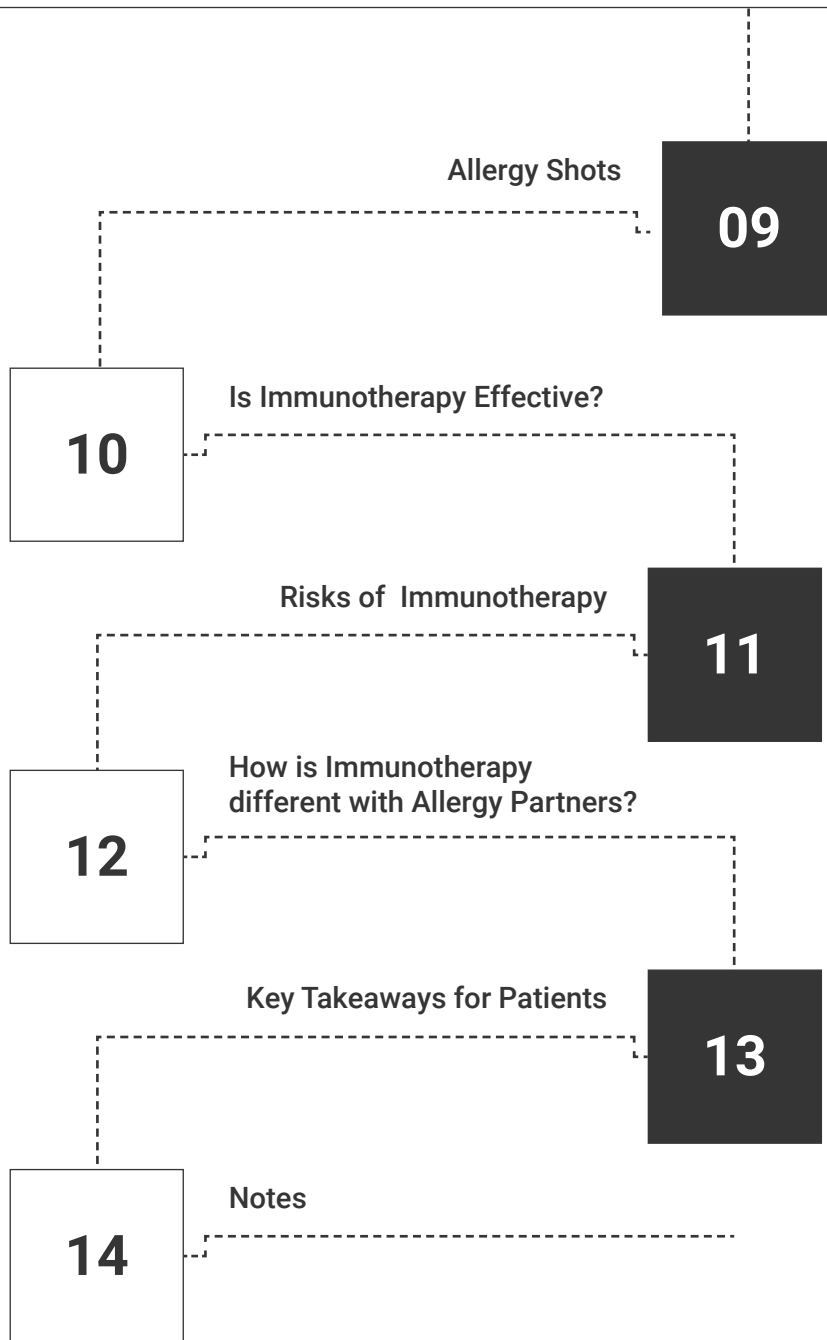
WHY SEE AN ALLERGIIST

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allergist [al-er-jist]

noun

A physician specializing in the diagnosis and treatment of allergies.



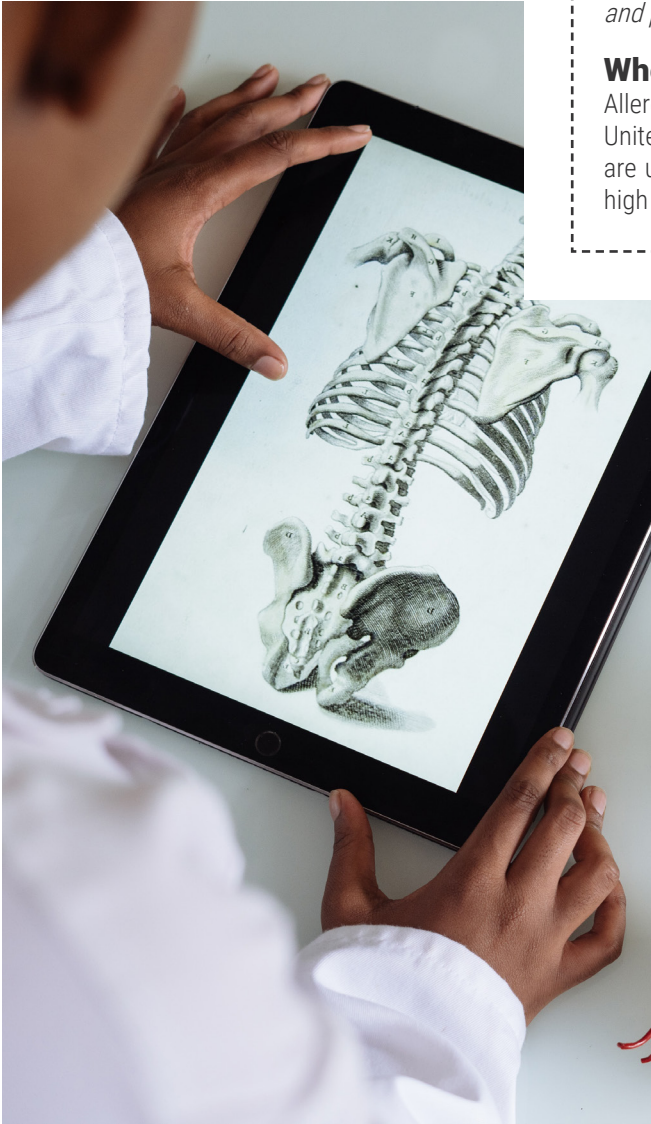
Essential Role of the Allergist

Allergists are trained in immunology, specializing in the treatment of allergies, asthma, and other immune conditions which range from the very rare to the very common, span all ages, and affect multiple body systems.

In the United States, becoming an allergist/immunologist requires specialized training beyond medical school. After completing medical school, physicians undergo three years of training in either internal medicine or pediatrics and subsequently, pass the exam of either the American Board of Internal Medicine or the American Board of Pediatrics. Internists and pediatricians interested in becoming an allergist/immunologist have at least an additional two years of study, called fellowship, in an allergy/immunology training program.

Education

And Board Certification



What does “board-certified” mean for an allergist?

Allergists/immunologists listed as board-certified have successfully passed certifying examination of the American Board of Allergy and Immunology. Board certification ensures that the treating physician has successfully completed all of the training to be an expert in the management, treatment and diagnosis of allergies, asthma, and other allergic diseases. *Note: “Board-eligible” allergists have completed all the necessary requirements to practice and provide care, but are waiting to take their board certification exam.*

When should you see an allergist?

Allergies and asthma are among the most common chronic diseases in the United States, affecting more than 50 million Americans every year. Allergists are uniquely poised to provide every patient individualized, comprehensive, high quality healthcare that will improve quality of life.

Conditions we treat:

- Allergic rhinitis (hay fever)
- Asthma
- Allergic conjunctivitis (eye allergies)
- Chronic cough
- Chronic sinusitis
- Food allergies
- Urticaria (hives) and angioedema (swelling)
- Atopic dermatitis (eczema)
- Contact dermatitis
- Anaphylaxis (from bee stings, drugs, food or other causes)
- Immune deficiencies



Allergies affect more than 50 million Americans

Allergy testing is the key step in identifying your allergy triggers and controlling your symptoms. As with any medical test, allergy testing needs to have the testing performed and interpreted by an expert in the field. These tests can help your allergist develop an allergy treatment plan to help you start feeling better.

+ Today, allergy tests are more convenient and accurate than ever.

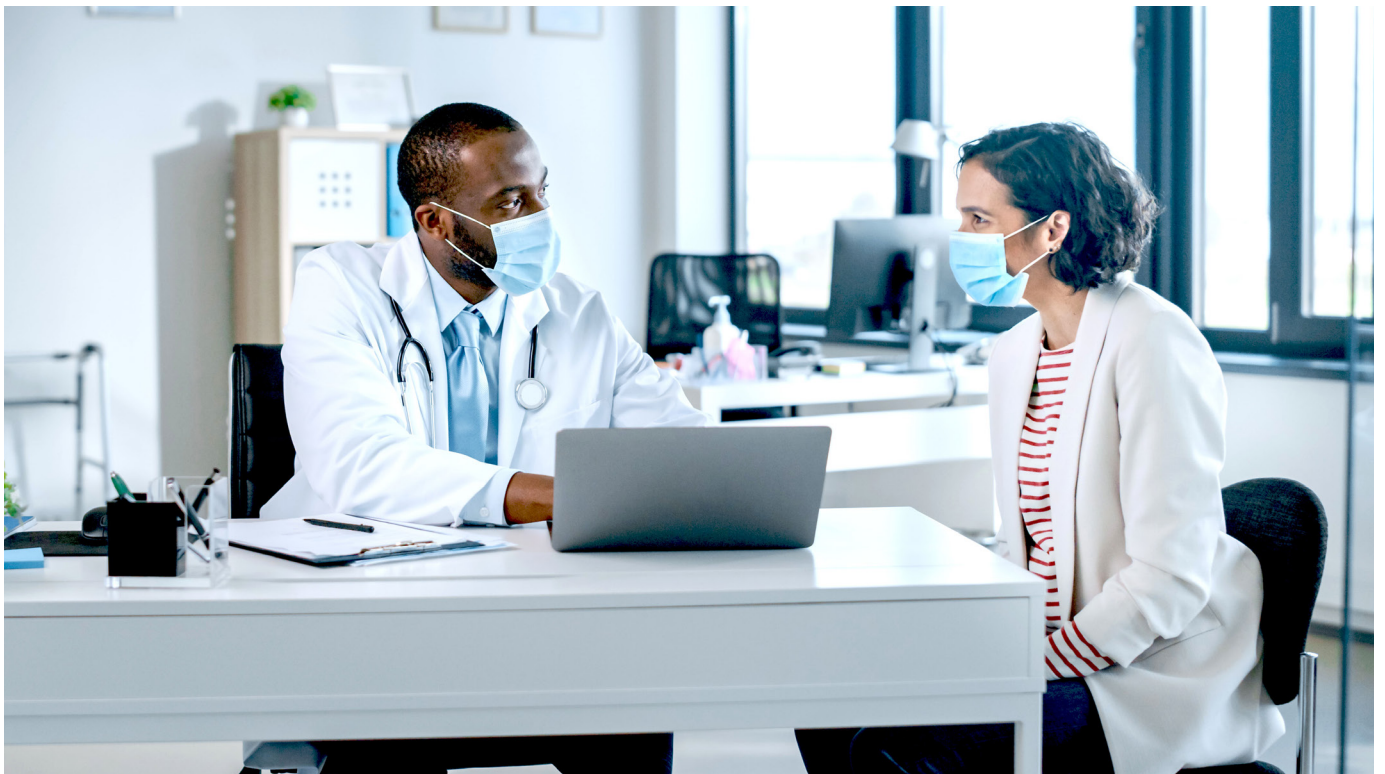
Start tackling your allergies

The first step in an effective allergy/asthma treatment program is to identify what you are allergic to. When combined with a detailed medical history, allergy testing can do just that.

Allergy Testing Options:

- 1) Skin testing
- 2) Blood-based allergy testing

Both have pros and cons that should be considered. With both types of testing it is very important to understand that a positive test by itself does not prove that you are allergic. To be allergic, the positive test must match your history. Your allergist is uniquely trained to make an accurate diagnosis, connecting your test results and medical history.





Skin Testing

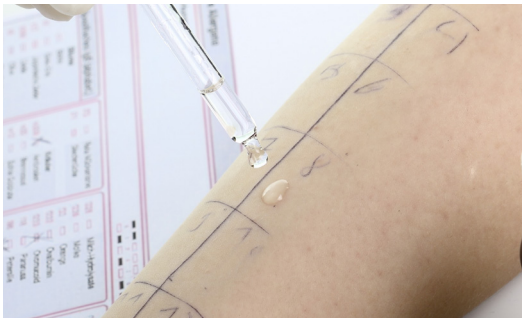
A Positive Skin Test Identifies Potential Allergens

First introduced in 1865, allergy skin testing remains the gold standard for diagnosing allergic sensitization. These tests use extracts (a concentrated liquid form) of common allergens such as pollen, mold, dust mites, animal dander, and foods. Testing involves placing a small amount of the allergens on the skin. A positive test will cause a small, raised itchy bump like a mosquito bite.

There are two types of skin testing:

Skin Prick Testing

Placing a drop of a suspected allergen (or extract) on the skin and scratching or pricking the surface of the skin.



Intradermal Testing

Injecting a small amount of extract just under the skin. A positive reaction to either test will appear as a small, slightly raised red bump.



Pros

- + **Quick** – Many allergens can be tested at the same time and results are read in 10-15 mins.
- + **Comfortable** – Both skin prick and intradermal testing involve very minimal discomfort, although a positive test can be itchy for several minutes.
- + **Accurate** – When performed with high quality extracts and by a trained technician, allergy skin testing is the most accurate test for allergy diagnosis.

Cons

- **Medication interference** – Certain medications, particularly antihistamines, will interfere with the results of skin testing. Patients taking such medications will be asked to stop taking them for 3-7 days prior to testing.
- **Allergic reactions** – Although very rare, skin testing can trigger symptoms of an allergic reaction. It is important, therefore, that such testing be performed under the supervision of an allergy specialist.
- **Underlying skin conditions** – Some skin conditions, such as severe eczema or hives, may make skin testing impractical.



Blood Testing

Blood Tests Measure Allergic Antibodies Known As IgE

When you have allergies, your immune system makes IgE antibodies to allergens in the environment (such as pollen or bee venom), foods, or medications. When you come in contact with that allergen, it will bind to the IgE, and your body will release chemicals such as histamine. Allergy blood tests detect and measure the amount of these allergen-specific IgE antibodies in your blood.

What can we test?

Allergy blood testing can be used to look for sensitivity to common allergy triggers, including dust, pet dander, trees, grasses, weeds, and molds related to where you live. They are also particularly helpful in diagnosing food allergies.

Pros

- + **One needle stick** – A single needle stick is sufficient to draw enough blood for testing.
- + **No medication interference** – Medications do not typically interfere with results, so blood-based testing may be better suited for those patients who cannot stop taking these medicines.
- + **Not impacted by existing skin conditions** – In patients with severe eczema or hives, blood-based testing may be preferable.

Cons

- **Test results timing** – Blood based test results are generally not available for several days.
- **Cost** – Blood based testing is more expensive than skin testing.
- **Variation in testing** – Testing may vary from lab to lab, so the results are not interchangeable. Your Allergist is familiar with the performance of the lab's particular test and can accurately interpret the results.

There are a number of other blood based tests that are advertised as allergy tests but whose clinical value has not been proven.

Immunotherapy

(AKA Allergy Shots)



Allergy shots help your body get used to allergens that trigger an allergic reaction. **Allergy shots are the most comprehensive treatment to address your allergies and requires no medication.** When successful, your symptoms will become less severe and occur less often, and you may not need as much medication. You should consider allergy shots if you have allergy symptoms and medicines don't give you enough relief, or you are looking to reduce the amount of medication you have to take.

How do Allergy Shots work?

For the first few months, you will go to your doctor once or twice a week to receive an allergy shot (in your upper arm). It will contain

a tiny amount of the thing you are allergic to: pollen, pet dander, mold, dust mites, for example.

Each time you visit you will receive a slightly higher dose, which will reduce your reaction to the allergen. Eventually, you will get to your maintenance dose. After that, you'll usually get a shot every 2-4 weeks. If you are doing well, your doctor will gradually increase the time between shots until you're getting them about once a month. It is important to continue your maintenance shots to maximize the long term benefit. Typically, a full course of immunotherapy lasts 3 to 5 years, but is customized for every patient.

Is Immunotherapy Effective?

Immunotherapy is indicated for the treatment of allergic rhinitis, allergic conjunctivitis (eye symptoms), allergic asthma, allergic eczema, bee sting, and fire ant anaphylaxis. Studies with allergic rhinitis (nasal symptoms), have demonstrated **significant improvements in allergy symptoms while needing less allergy medication***.

Bee sting/fire ant venom immunotherapy **reduces an individual's risk of recurrent anaphylaxis to 2-3%**. In allergic asthma, multiple clinical trials have demonstrated that immunotherapy reduces both symptoms and medications. Asthma guidelines recommend that all patients with persistent asthma undergo allergy testing and be considered for immunotherapy.

In addition, inhalant immunotherapy may also provide benefits for those suffering from eczema. Unlike medications that treat only symptoms, immunotherapy is a disease modifying therapy. In young allergic children, immunotherapy has been shown to prevent the development of additional sensitivities over time. In addition, immunotherapy can **reduce an allergic child's risk of developing asthma by up to 60%**.



** See the inside front cover for references for statements made on this page.*



Allergic Reactions & Immunotherapy

Allergic Reactions

Allergic reactions with immunotherapy may occur. Although rare, most cases are mild, but severe reactions (known as anaphylaxis) could be potentially life threatening.

The largest immunotherapy safety analysis was performed by Allergy Partners:

- We reviewed 661,123 patients who received 1,108,621 allergy shots.
- Out of those injections, there were only 283 systemic reactions (0.025%, or 1 reaction for every 4,000 injections) – Most reactions were mild and none were fatal.

Although the possibility of a severe reaction is scary, you won't be on your own. You'll be observed in our office for 30 minutes after each shot, if you have a severe reaction after you leave, you should return to our office or go to the nearest emergency room.

How is immunotherapy different with Allergy Partners?

Allergy Partners is the nation's largest single specialty practice dedicated to the treatment of allergies, asthma, and allergic diseases. Our physicians are dedicated to identifying clinical best practices that will ensure the very best for each patient.

Working together and based on the latest medical research, Allergy Partners' allergists have developed a comprehensive and standardized immunotherapy program. This program focuses on 4 areas: accurate diagnosis, effective therapy, enhanced safety, and medication quality.

Working with leading botanists, Allergy Partners' doctors have developed testing panels tailored to different parts of the US. This ensures that every patient is tested to the allergens most likely to cause symptoms and provide an accurate diagnosis.

How well immunotherapy works depends on the dose and Allergy Partners' program provides doses clinically shown to be most effective. At the same time, the program allows your allergist to customize your immunotherapy to maximize not only outcomes, but your safety and comfort.

Finally, all of Allergy Partners immunotherapy is produced in our central Extract Lab, located in Asheville, NC. This state of the art facility ensures that each and every patient's custom immunotherapy vials are of the highest quality and produced in strict accordance with Federal safety regulations.



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Key Takeaways

+ Board-certified allergists have successfully passed certifying examination of the American Board of Allergy and Immunology.

+ Allergy shots help your body get used to allergens. They are the most effective way to treat your allergies, with a very low chance of allergic reactions.

+ Allergy blood testing can be used to look for sensitivity to common allergy triggers, including dust, pet dander, trees, grasses, weeds, and molds related to where you live. They are also particularly helpful in diagnosing food allergies.

+ Allergy skin testing remains the gold standard for diagnosing allergic sensitization of common allergens such as pollen, mold, dust mites, animal dander, and foods.

+ Skin Prick Testing: Placing a drop of a suspected allergen (or extract) on the skin and scratching or pricking the surface of the skin.

+ Allergies and asthma are among the most common chronic diseases in the United States, affecting more than 50 million Americans every year. Allergists are uniquely poised to provide every patient individualized, comprehensive, high quality healthcare that will improve quality of life.

The Allergy Partners Difference:

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+ Allergy Partners immunotherapy is produced in our central Extract Lab, located in Asheville, NC. This state of the art facility ensures that each and every patient's custom immunotherapy vials are of the highest quality and produced in strict accordance with Federal safety regulations.

+ Working with leading botanists, Allergy Partners doctors have developed testing panels tailored to different parts of the US. This ensures that every patient is tested to the allergens most likely to cause symptoms and provide an accurate diagnosis.

+ The largest immunotherapy safety analysis was performed by Allergy Partners. We reviewed over 1 million shots and tracked a very small number of reactions (0.025%). Most reactions were mild and none were fatal.

WE ARE THE NATION'S LARGEST SINGLE-SPECIALTY ALLERGY PRACTICE. OUR ORGANIZATION IS DEDICATED TO THE DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT OF ASTHMA AND ALLERGIC RELATED DISEASES.

Years of training and experience allow the physicians of Allergy Partners to offer specialty care for a broad spectrum of disorders in the field of allergy, asthma, and clinical immunology. Our physicians are board-certified/board-eligible specialists who offer the latest advances in allergy and asthma care for children and adults.

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