



Dermatology and Allergy Services for Animals

Choosing an allergy vaccine: Subcutaneous or Sublingual?

When initiating immunotherapy, you have the choice of subcutaneous (injectable/shots) or sublingual (oral/drops). Injectable immunotherapy has been around for decades and is a proven method for allergy desensitization. Most patients do not mind the injection much at all. Sublingual therapy is much newer, but doesn't involve any needles or injections. Because both methods have about the same level of safety and efficacy, the decision mostly lies in the client's preference of administration along with the pet's temperament. Occasionally, one type of vaccine may be recommended over the other based on your pet's allergies.



Photo from <https://icatcare.org>

Whichever method you choose, we will be sure you are comfortable with the administration and what to expect with the therapy. Below is a table outlining some key points.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Photo from Heska Corporation

	Subcutaneous	Sublingual
Administration:	Injection under the skin	Drops under the tongue
Protocol:	2 ½-month desensitization schedule with more frequent administration than <i>typically</i> one injection under the skin every 21 days	2 ½ - 3 month escalation phase, but frequency of dosing is always once daily
Results:	Good response in 60-80% of patients. Full results can take up to 12 months to see	Same as subcutaneous though certain allergens may respond better to sublingual therapy
Risk of Reaction:	Very low	Very low
Formulation:	Custom made in-house (<i>usually about 7-10 day turnaround from time of order</i>)	Custom made in-house (<i>usually about 7-10 day turnaround from time of order</i>)
Storage:	Needs refrigeration, shelf life of 12 months	Needs refrigeration, shelf life of 12 months
Cost w/ <u>average usage</u>: (Price can be more or less as some patients receive immunotherapy on a different schedule)	Approximately \$325 per year plus cost of syringes (syringes are purchased through a pharmacy of your choosing)	Approximately \$260 every 6 months

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