

Dermatology & Allergy Services for Animals

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Choosing an allergy vaccine: Subcutaneous or Sublingual?



Photo from <https://icatcare.org>

When initiating allergen specific immunotherapy (allergy vaccine), you have the choice of subcutaneous (injectable/shots) or sublingual (oral/drops). Injectable allergy vaccine 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.



Figure 1



Figure 2

Photo from Heska Corp.

| | Subcutaneous | Sublingual |
|--------------------------|--|--|
| Administration: | Injection under the skin | Drops under the tongue |
| Protocol: | 2 ½-month desensitization phase then <i>typically</i> 1 injection under the skin every 21 days. Therapy is often life-long. | 100-day escalation phase, but always dosed once daily. Therapy is often life-long. |
| Results: | Good response in 60-80% of patients. Takes several months to become effective. Full efficacy can take up to 12 months. (Some patients may still require additional therapy (e.g. Apoquel, Cytopoint, Atopica). Occasionally some patients do not respond). | Same as subcutaneous though certain allergies may respond better to sublingual therapy |
| Risk of Reaction: | Low. | Very low. |
| Formulation: | Custom made in-house (<i>usually about 10-14 day turnaround from time of order</i>) | Custom made in-house (<i>usually about 10-14 day turnaround from time of order</i>) |
| Storage: | Needs refrigeration, shelf life of 12 months | Needs refrigeration, shelf life of 12 months |
| Order Quantities: | 1 vial (10cc) – lasts about 6 months 2 vials (20cc) – lasts about 12 months **please ask for current pricing** | 1 bottle – about 70 days 2 bottles – about 140 days **please ask for current pricing** |

****Visit www.dermatologyandallergyvet.com/videos for a demo and lesson in administration.****