

# ALLERGEN IMMUNOTHERAPY: WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW



Allergen immunotherapy is a treatment which desensitises the immune system to a known allergen that triggers your allergies. It works by introducing the allergen to the body over a period of time in small doses. Unlike other allergy treatments which reduce or manage symptoms, allergen immunotherapy aims to switch off the body's immune response to the trigger entirely.

Some people with allergic asthma and/or allergic rhinitis who have known allergens may benefit from allergen immunotherapy. You may be able to access immunotherapy for the following triggers:

- house dust mites
- pollens (e.g. grass, tree and weed pollens)
- animal dander and moulds

You may require multiple treatments if you have more than one significant allergen.

It is given via injections (subcutaneous) or a tablet, spray or drop under the tongue (sublingual). Age restrictions vary depending on the method and specific trigger.

If you would like to learn more about allergen immunotherapy and whether it would be an appropriate treatment for you, speak to your doctor. It is likely you will need to be referred to an allergy specialist before starting treatment.

It is important to be aware of the cost of allergen immunotherapy in any discussions with your doctor or specialist as it is currently not subsidised on the PBS. Allergen immunotherapy benefits can be experienced within months after starting treatment but the full course of treatment will usually be three to five years. You may also need to consider the cost of appointments with a specialist, and travel to these as required.

The results of a full course of treatment should be long-lasting or permanent, so you may save money on allergy treatments in the long run.

For more information on how to manage your allergies, call **1800 ASTHMA (1800 278 462)** and speak with an Asthma Educator or visit [asthma.org.au](https://asthma.org.au)



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Flo, White Magic and eChamber are campaign partners of Asthma Australia and have not been involved in the development of this resource.