

ALLERGY SHOTS

I need to get regular allergy shots. Can I do this at Counseling, Health, and Wellness Services (CHWS)?

Yes, we give all allergy shots except for bee and wasp venom. We can help you with a community referral for venom injections. Allergy shots are given by appointment only. Because allergy shots have a potential risk of causing a severe, even life-threatening reaction, we give them only when our nurse practitioner, physician assistant or our physician is in the clinic to provide emergency care, if needed. If your allergist requires a physician to be present, call CHWS at extension 1555 to schedule an appointment when our physician is available. We will refer you to a provider in the community if we cannot accommodate your schedule.

Does it cost anything?

Yes, there is a \$20 per visit fee for this service. The cost can be charged to your student account, and we will provide you with an itemized statement for you to submit to your insurance company.

Do I need to make an appointment for this?

Yes, you will need an appointment. Schedule a 30 minute appointment for your initial visit with the RN who will review your medical history and your allergist's orders. Please bring your antigens and paper work to CHWS prior to your first appointment. Because we often need to contact your allergist to clarify orders, we may not be able to administer allergy shots on your first visit. Our physician will also review your medical history and allergy shot orders. We will discuss an appropriate time for your first allergy shot at your initial visit. **You will be required to remain in the clinic for 30 minutes after each injection, so plan to be in the clinic about 40 minutes for each appointment.**

Why must I wait 30 minutes after I get my shot?

As we mentioned earlier, allergy shots have a potential for a severe reaction. We want you to be close to a source of emergency care should you start to react adversely. Most reactions to allergy injections are mild.

My allergist prefers me to see a specialist in Tacoma. Can this be arranged?

Yes, the Tacoma area has allergists who are taking new patients. We can provide referrals.

A mild reaction may cause:

- redness at the injection site
- a white, raised bump called a "wheal"
- itching at the injection site

These mild reactions are noted on your medical record and rarely require other medical interventions. Occasionally, we will use an ice pack and/or oral antihistamines and recheck you after 15 minutes.

A more serious reaction may cause:

- itching in other areas of the body
- hives (wheals) in other areas of the body
- shortness of breath
- wheezing
- a tight feeling in the throat

If you notice these symptoms while you are in the waiting area, notify the front office staff immediately and they will alert the medical staff.

You may have a "**delayed reaction**", i.e., a reaction that occurs after the 30 minute period following your injection. **If you experience hives, shortness of breath, wheezing, or tightness in the throat and you are on campus, call Security immediately at x3311 and ask them to call 911. Security is best equipped to direct emergency personnel to the appropriate building on campus. If you are off campus when you experience these symptoms, call 911.** If the reaction is local (e.g. increased itching at injection site, an increased area of redness or an increase in the size of the raised bump) observe the reaction and report this to the RN at your next visit. Your dose may need to be adjusted.

Last time I got my allergy shot they gave me less of the solution than before. Why is that?

Instructions from your doctor provide clear dosing guidelines. However, this can change depending on several factors:

- Is this is your peak allergy season, with more symptoms than usual?
- Are you currently sick with another illness like a cold or cough?
- Did you miss any allergy shots?
- Did you have a large reaction last time you got our allergy shot?

If any of these circumstances apply, we may decrease the amount of solution we give you to prevent a more serious reaction. Let us know if you have questions.

What do I do when I run out of the allergy solution (antigens)?

We will notify you when the solution is running low, so we can discuss ordering more antigens. Your allergist will want copies of your shot records. We can order your antigens unless you prefer to do this yourself. It usually takes a minimum of two weeks to receive antigens through the mail.

What about allergy shots over winter and spring breaks?

Tell the RN when you will be leaving campus, and arrange a time to pick up your antigens. Antigens need to be refrigerated. Plan to have a small cooler if you will be traveling. If you are going home you can see your allergist for allergy shots. If you plan to stay in the Tacoma area, we can refer you to a local provider.

Who do I contact in CHWS if I have questions or concerns?

The RN will be administering the majority of your allergy shots. If the RN is out of the office your antigens will be administered by our nurse practitioner or physician assistant. Call extension 1555 and ask for the RN.

Linda M. Everson, R.N.,C.

Director of Counseling, Health, and Wellness Services

Clinic telephone (253) 879-1555

Direct line (253) 879-3495 – for non-emergent messages