



EASTERN VIRGINIA
EAR, NOSE & THROAT
SPECIALISTS

Sublingual Immunotherapy (SLIT)

Sublingual Immunotherapy, or SLIT, is an alternative treatment for allergy injections. SLIT is a form of immunotherapy which involves putting drops of allergenic extracts under the tongue. This form of immunotherapy has been used for years in Europe and has recently become a form of allergy treatment in the United States. However, it is not currently approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and therefore is not covered by insurance. SLIT is administered daily by placing allergenic extract under the tongue, held for 2 minutes and then swallowed. SLIT works by exposing the immune system to allergens on a regular basis, so after time the body does not over react by releasing histamine and causing allergy symptoms when exposed to airborne allergens.

Patients tend to have little or no side effects while taking SLIT. Although some patients have complained of the following side effects:

- nasal congestion and sneezing
- itchy mouth
- irritation of the lips and tongue
- itching, redness and swelling of the eyes
- nausea, vomiting and diarrhea
- asthma symptoms

Although no serious or fatal reactions to SLIT have been reported to date; Eastern Virginia Ear, Nose and Throat Specialists require all patients receiving SLIT be prescribed an Epi-Pen in case of a possible anaphylactic reaction.

Sublingual Immunotherapy is available to all allergy patients. Asthma patients should be monitored more closely, since asthma symptoms can worsen on SLIT.

As noted before, at this time insurance does not cover Sublingual Immunotherapy for allergy treatment, so it is an out-of-pocket charge.