



SAMPLE INJECTION TECHNIQUE INSTRUCTIONS



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Once your veterinarian has performed an allergy test and determined that your pet has specific reactions to environmental allergens, such as house dust mites, trees, grasses, weeds, molds, and insects, allergen-specific immunotherapy (ASIT) may be recommended. ASIT attempts to make your pet more tolerant of environmental allergens, resulting in better control of their allergic symptoms. This form of ASIT is administered by injection. Your veterinarian will go over the treatment schedule.

- Most schedules start out with dilute concentrations
 - Injections given every 3 days
- Over time, the volume and intervals between injections will increase, but this is subject to modification
 - Depends on how your pet responds to treatment
- Most pets can be trained to readily accept the injections

(See “Tips for Giving Injections – Making it Easy.”)

The following steps should be followed:

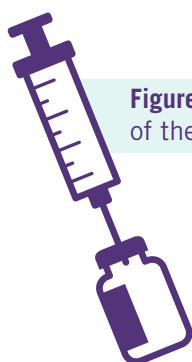


Figure 1. Drawing of the allergen.

Step 1: Prepare the injection

Take the appropriate vial according to your schedule from the refrigerator and draw up the correct amount of solution into the allergen syringe provided by your veterinarian (**Figure 1**). Use a new syringe for every injection and dispose of used syringes in a proper sharps disposal container. Record the date of administration if it is not already listed on your schedule. To make the injections more comfortable, draw up the solution and let the syringe sit at room temperature for 5 to 10 minutes before giving the injection.

Figure 2. Nape of the neck (common site to give injection).



Step 2: Find the correct site for injection

For dogs and cats, the most common location to give the injection is over the nape of the neck (**Figure 2**). However, the injection can be given anywhere in the loose skin of the shoulders. For horses, the best location is the side of the neck, well below the mane area. It is also helpful to rotate locations so you do not give the injection in the exact same site each time. The injection is given subcutaneously (under the skin), and not into the skin or deep into the muscle. If the injection is given within the skin (intraepidermal) or into the muscle (intramuscular), your pet is more likely to have a reaction at the injection site. This is not a big problem, but it could cause swelling or itching.

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Step 3: Give the injection

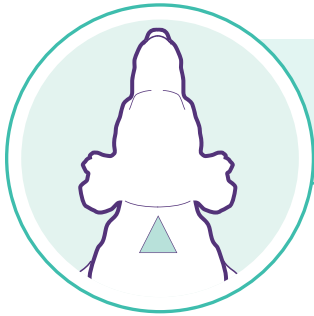


Figure 3. Give the injection slightly below the center of the triangle at a slight downward angle or parallel to the skin.

In all species, you want to create a “tent” or “pocket” where the injection is to be given. This makes it easier to be sure you are giving the injection under the skin. You can pick up the skin with a variety of techniques, but the easiest is to use your thumb and forefinger and make a tent or triangular-shaped area (**Figure 3**) where the needle can be placed through the skin into the subcutaneous location.

The injection is given slightly below the center of the triangle at a slight downward angle or parallel to the skin (**Figure 4**). There are different techniques for holding the syringe to properly place it into the pocket of skin. It is usually easiest to hold the syringe like a dart (**Figure 5**).

Figure 4. Actual needle placement in the nape of the neck.

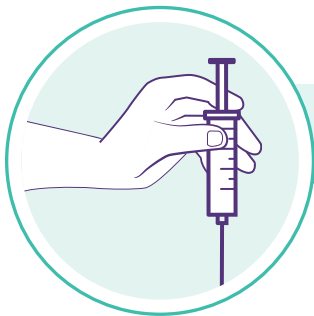


Figure 5. Hold the syringe like a dart, making it easier to inject.

Without applying pressure on the plunger, insert the needle through the skin. Then apply pressure to the plunger while still keeping the body of the syringe steady to give the injection (**Figure 6**). **Take care to avoid puncturing your own skin.** This is more of a concern if you have allergies yourself.

If you do not position the needle properly, you may inject solution onto the surface of the skin or hair coat, or you may completely penetrate the skin fold and inject the allergen out of the other side. You will know this has happened if you see or feel the solution on the skin or hair coat. Contact your veterinarian before re-administering the injection if this happens.

Figure 6. Apply pressure to the plunger after the needle is through the skin.



(Photo courtesy of Animal Dermatology Clinic, Wayne Rosenkrantz, DVM, DACVD)

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Step 4: Monitor for reactions

You should observe your pet for 30 minutes and preferably up to 2 hours after an allergen injection. Reactions to ASIT are rare in animals.

Mild reactions	Rare reactions	Severe reactions
• Increased itching • Listlessness • Sleepiness • Anxiousness	• Tenderness or swelling at injection site • Panting • Hyperactivity • Increased bowel sounds • Changes in urinary habits • Frequent swallowing	• Vomiting (not seen in horses) • Diarrhea • Weakness • Collapse • Hives • Facial swelling Contact your veterinarian if your pet experiences any severe reactions.

Record information about reactions and the itching that your pet is experiencing to help your veterinarian make adjustments to their treatment.

- Reactions may occur soon after the injection
- Changes in your pet’s itching (scratching, licking, etc) or other allergy symptoms can occur 1 or 2 days after injection
- Itching can be recorded on a scale from 0 (none) to 10 (most intense)
- Note the date when a change in your pet’s itching occurs
 - So that it can be compared to the volume and concentration of the last injection

Speak to your veterinarian about any adverse reactions your pet experiences no matter how severe.



Tips for Giving Injections – Making it Easy

- Draw up the solution into the syringe and let it reach room temperature before giving the injection
- Practice giving a “mock” injection without actually piercing the skin. Praise your pet or give a treat when your pet has been well-behaved during the injection process
- When giving the actual injection, continue to associate it with a positive response (praise or going for a walk) or reward (favorite treat)
- Even on days when you are not giving the injection, you can go through the mock injection process and reward your pet to reinforce the good behavior
- If you are unable to give your pet the injections, talk to your veterinarian about other options that may be available, such as injections in the veterinarian’s office or oral immunotherapy

