

HELP & ADVICE

Conclusion

The injection plan serves as a guideline – each animal reacts individually, thus adjustments for every patient may become necessary. Observe your animal carefully and thus assist your vet to adjust the therapy plan specifically for your pet.

An allergy is incurable, the majority of cases (more than 70%) can be controlled properly with ASIT, though! Even if your animal responds very well to therapy, there may be periods when additional therapy is required. But with the help of ASIT these phases may be shorter and less frequent.

Quick reference

→ **For which diseases is allergen-specific immunotherapy the most appropriate therapy?**

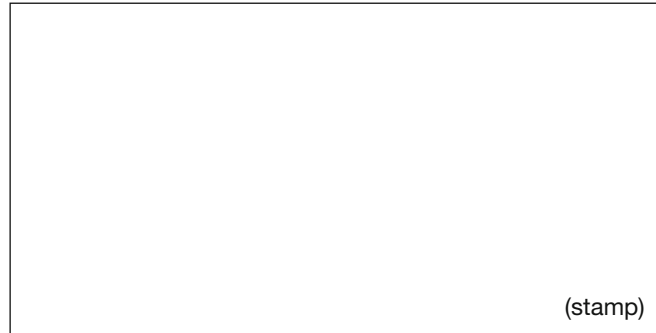
→ **Application**

→ **Course of the therapy**

→ **What to do, if . . .**

→ **Conclusion**

Provided by your veterinarian



Service

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LABOKLIN

D

Tel.
Fax
E-Mail

Steubenstr. 4
97688 Bad Kissingen
Germany
+49 971 7 20 20
+49 971 6 85 46
info@laboklin.com
www.laboklin.com



LABOKLIN Headquarters Bad Kissingen



Lab profile

Name: LABOKLIN GmbH & Co. KG
Office: Bad Kissingen
Founded: 1989
Type: Laboratory for clinical diagnostics
Qualifications: One of the leading laboratories in Europe
Operating in: Europe, Asia, Arabian Peninsula
Team: Over one hundred specialists and veterinarians
Specialty: Research projects at the federal level

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ALLERGEN-SPECIFIC IMMUNOTHERAPY IN DOGS AND CATS



HELP & ADVICE

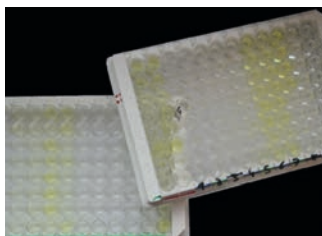
The modern information series provided
by your vet and LABOKLIN

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For which diseases is allergen-specific immunotherapy the most appropriate therapy?

Animals suffering from allergic diseases have a genetic predisposition for such diseases, and special antibodies (IgE antibodies) against causative substances (= allergens) are formed. These antibodies can be detected in the blood by taking blood samples. ASIT is only used for atopic dermatitis (environmental allergens). Animals suffering from this type of allergy show positive reactions to weed, tree or grass pollen, house dust and/or storage mites, moulds, various insects, animal dandruff or epithelia. Pets suffering from atopic dermatitis respond with clinical symptoms like itchiness, with or without a rash or asthma. Please note: this kind of therapy is not possible for pets suffering from food hypersensitivity or flea dermatitis allergy (in these cases, only avoidance of causative allergens leads to amelioration of clinical symptoms). Once your vet has confirmed his/her clinical diagnosis of atopic dermatitis by skin or a blood test, you know exactly to which allergens your animal is sensitised to. Thus, you should decide to choose an



allergen-specific immunotherapy (ASIT) to alleviate the clinical symptoms of your pet.

What exactly is the allergen-specific immunotherapy?

ASIT is the practice of administering gradually increasing quantities of an allergen extract subcutaneously to an individual with IgE-mediated allergic disease over a longer period of time in order to ameliorate the symptoms associated with subsequent exposure to the causative allergens.

What does that mean? An individual allergen extract is produced specifically for your pet. The formulation of an allergen-specific immunotherapy is based on the results of previously performed allergy testing (prior condition: good correlation with medical history and clinical symptoms). Individualised solutions containing the substances that cause the allergic reactions (= allergens) in your pet are prepared (only possible for environmental allergens: pollen, moulds, mites and insects, not for food allergens or flea saliva!). As an ASIT is formulated individually for each patient, there is a delivery time of about 3 to 4 weeks until you receive the



allergen extract. Over a period of several months the allergens will be administered subcutaneously (under the skin) to your animal, in increasing concentrations and intervals in order to achieve a higher tolerance of the immune system against these specific allergens. The success rate of ASIT is more than 70% and depends on many important factors (age of the patient, duration of symptoms, and so on): the earlier you start with therapy, the higher the success rate will be!

Application

In general, ASIT is recommended if the symptoms of your animal last longer than 3 – 4 months per year.

At the beginning of the therapy you need two vials of different concentrations. You need to consider the following:

- At the beginning, the subcutaneous injections will be performed once a week (initiation period). Then the intervals are gradually increased up to 4 weeks (maintenance period).
- You should adhere to these intervals. If you forgot an injection (no for longer than a week), it is possible to carry on

with the dosage plan without any difficulties.

- After the first injection of each vial the animal should be observed for 30 – 60 minutes in case of an adverse reaction (very rare).
- One hour before and after the injection the animal should not be fed.
- Excessive effort (long walks, playing) should be avoided during the first hours after the injection.
- Routine vaccinations should not be carried out on the same day as ASIT injections.
- The vials need to be stored in the refrigerator.
- The refill for the therapy needs to be ordered early enough to prevent relapses.

Course of the therapy

At the beginning of the therapy, sometimes an additional treatment with other drugs is necessary, e.g. cortisone, so that the itching is bearable for your pet. Nevertheless you should try to use other drugs as little as possible, because the symptoms of your animal are used to control the success of the ASIT. If you use too much additional medication, it is possible that a necessary adaptation of the dosage plan is obscured. The injections should be given in regular intervals in increasing dosage. In more than 70% of cases

ASIT shows good success rates. However, at the beginning it is not predictable if your animal belongs to the bigger group of good success, or if your animal unfortunately belongs to the smaller group which does not show any clinical improvement with this kind of therapy. You should be patient, though: some animals show an improvement after a few weeks, but the final assessment of therapy can be done only after one year.

What to do, if . . .

...your animal does not respond well to the ASIT or the symptoms get worse after initial success? Consult your vet – probably you have to deal with an additional disease. That can be as simple as ectoparasites, secondary bacterial infection, but also a very different new disease. But it could also be necessary to adapt the interval, concentration or sometimes even the content of the ASIT.

...the symptoms worsen with increasing dose directly after or the day after the injection? Discuss this with your vet. Sometimes the next injection needs to be reduced by two steps (e.g. 0.7 to 0.3 ml). Afterwards, an increase can be tried again. If symptoms occur again, the injection dose will be decreased again, but only by one step. This dose can be considered as an individually detected maintenance dose for this animal.

...the itchiness starts again directly before the next injection? Talk to your vet. Sometimes the interval just needs to be decreased.

...your animal responds well to ASIT? You should not quit therapy, but maintain it as a lifelong treatment. You can try to increase the intervals of injections and if necessary shorten again. If you interrupt therapy, despite having an excellent response to ASIT, the symptoms will recur (relapse), because an allergy is incurable. If you have stopped therapy for a longer period of time you need to restart with ASIT. The allergy testing also needs to be redone, as the allergic spectrum may have changed, especially in the case of a long discontinuation of therapy. Furthermore, our experience and data show that after abandonment of therapy, success rates are not as favourable as they were at the first beginning of therapy. That means, if you restart ASIT after a longer period of time, you will not get good success rates any more. So we really recommend not quitting hyposensitisation, especially if it works well.

