

**Patient
Information**

Desensitisation for bee and wasp stings

Introduction

This leaflet provides information on your treatment for bee and wasp stings.

What is desensitisation?

De-sensitisation is when you have treatment (injections) to help stop you having severe allergic reactions. You will have weekly injections for 10 to 12 weeks and then monthly injections for 3 years.

Before you start your treatment

You will be asked to sign a consent form. You may also be asked to take an oral antihistamine before you come into the unit for your treatment.

Side effects

Most reactions happen within an hour of having the injection. Severe reactions are rare. A nurse will be with you during your treatment and for the hour afterwards. Fatal reactions have been reported, but are very rare.

The possible side effects of desensitisation are as follows:

Mild reactions

- The injection site may itch slightly
- Local 'flare and wheal' (raised lump with a red area around it)
- Swelling around the injection site

Moderate reactions

- Intense itching
- Erythema (redness of the skin)
- Rhinitis (runny nose)
- Angioedema (swelling of the face and lips)

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Severe reactions

- Difficulty in breathing (wheezing)
- Anaphylactic shock, this causes a severe drop in blood pressure and collapse

What happens if I have a reaction?

Emergency treatment for severe reactions may be needed. Mild and moderate reactions can be easily treated with antihistamines.

If you have repeated mild allergic reactions, or a severe reaction, we may decide not to continue with the treatment.

Starting your injections

You will be given a date and time to attend the Edward Jenner Unit at Gloucestershire Royal Hospital.

Your injection is usually given in the upper outer part of your arm.

Before each treatment

You must report any of the following:

- Infections, such as coughs or colds
- Any worsening in asthma or if you have a wheeze or bad cough
- Any other illnesses
- Any change in medication
- Any late reactions to desensitisation after your last visit
- Any vaccination carried out within the last 7 days
- If you are taking heart medication such as betablockers

After your treatment

- You must stay in the unit for 1 hour after your injection, as allergic reactions may happen within this time
- Report to the nurses any wheeze, cough, shortness of breath, rash or giddiness while you are in the unit

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What should I do if I have a delayed reaction when I get home?

If the reaction is a red itchy rash take 1 antihistamine tablet. If you have a more severe reaction, ring your GP or NHS 111 for advice.

If you have been prescribed an adrenaline pen, remember to keep it with you at all times. Be aware of the expiry date and order a repeat prescription from your GP as needed.

Contact information

The Edward Jenner Unit

Gloucestershire Royal Hospital

Tel: 0300 422 5213

Monday to Thursday, 8:00am to 5:00pm

Further information

British Allergy Foundation

Tel: 01322 619 898

Monday to Friday, 9:00 am to 9:00 pm

Saturday to Sunday, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Website: www.allergyfoundation.com

E-mail: info@allergyuk.org

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