

"There are two ways to treat allergies," reflects Daniel Rothbaum, MD, a board-certified otolaryngologist with Atlantic Ear, Nose & Throat. "Oftentimes, we focus on treating symptoms with medications such as nasal sprays or antihistamines. However, other times, we try to treat the underlying causes of allergy through *allergy immunotherapy*."

Dr. Rothbaum continues, "Traditional allergy immunotherapy has involved allergy shots, which have many downsides. Recent research indicates that *allergy drops* may be a safer and more effective approach."

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Ear, Nose & Throat

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We asked Dr. Rothbaum to discuss the treatment options available for allergy sufferers who wish more than just symptomatic treatment.

What are allergy drops? Unlike most allergy drugs, which treat only symptoms, allergy drops address the underlying cause of allergies. Allergy drops are administered in gradually increasing dosages under the tongue until the patient develops a tolerance to the allergy-causing substance. As a patient's body develops this tolerance, the patient is less likely to have allergic reactions.

How are allergy drops different from allergy shots? Allergy drops

Allergy Drops: A Better Treatment for Your Allergies?

Allergy drops offer faster relief, a lower risk profile, and fewer office visits than traditional allergy injections.



are administered as drops under the tongue. Allergy shots are injected under the skin. Compared to allergy shots, allergy drops have a substantially lower risk of severe adverse reactions, such as anaphylaxis. In fact, allergy drops were introduced in the 1990s because of the problem of adverse reactions with allergy shots.

It seems as though allergy immunotherapy has typically involved allergy shots. Why is that? Until very recently, most of the research on allergy immunotherapy has been about allergy shots. However, given the drawbacks of allergy shots, people started looking at alternative ways to deliver allergy immunotherapy. Allergy drops are considered a safer and more convenient alternative, and therefore, much recent research has focused on the effectiveness of allergy drops.

Are allergy drops a new treatment or a variation on an existing one? Allergy drops have been around for a long time, but they had not been well studied until recently.

What are the benefits of using allergy drops? There are several advantages. First, the risk of having a side effect or serious reaction is much lower than with allergy shots. Consequently, you don't have to come to a doctor's office for treatment, and you don't have to wait around afterwards. You can take allergy drops at home.

In addition, you can escalate allergy drops much faster [than injections]. Whereas it might take a year to get to an effective dose with shots, you can be up to an effective dose in ten days with drops, according to the recommendations of the American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy.

It's an enormous difference, so we consider drops to be a much more compelling type of treatment.

Do you expect the allergy drops to be more effective than shots? Yes, because the risk of side effects is less, and especially because you can get to an effective dose so much faster. Because of that, more patients will get to a maintenance dose, experience the benefits, and hopefully continue with treatment. With allergy

shots, many patients drop out. You can imagine how frustrating it would be to get an injection every week for a year and still not reach a dose that's effective.

Also, the allergy drops taste sweet because of the way they're prepared, so it's much easier to get a child to take them than to undergo a weekly injection.

Are other practices in the area offering this treatment? There are other practices offering allergy drops, but we will be the only practice doing the ten-day escalation, as recommended by the American Academy of Otolaryngic Allergy.

This is an exciting new option in the treatment of allergy that previously hasn't been available. It's a great alternative, particularly for patients who don't like getting injections or who have not benefited from them.

This interview was conducted by Michael J. Sahnro of the editorial staff of Volusia Health Care News.

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The skilled physicians at Atlantic Ear, Nose & Throat welcome your call. They are located in Lake Mary, DeLand, and Orange City. Call (407) 444-5225 or (386) 774-9880 for an initial consultation at any location.



Daniel Rothbaum, MD, is board certified in otolaryngology. After receiving his undergraduate degree from Harvard University and his medical degree from the Yale School of Medicine, he completed his general surgical internship and residency at Johns Hopkins Hospital, Baltimore, where he focused primarily on facial plastic surgery and reconstruction. Dr. Rothbaum is a member of the American Academy of Otolaryngology, Head and Neck Surgery and the American Medical Association.

Mother Returns to Trusted Surgeon

When chronic sinusitis threatens her son's well-being, one mother seeks out the ear, nose and throat doctor who helped him years earlier. He offers a safe, minimally invasive solution.

Barbara Costa's son was plagued by recurring sinus infections.

"Tyler was suffering with congestion for about a year," she explains. "We thought it was allergies."

Like any conscientious parent, Barbara tried to find the answer, and took her son to an allergist. However, it turned out Tyler wasn't allergic to anything.

Still, the sinus problem worsened.

"In May 2009, it started to peak—Tyler had really black eyes and trouble sleeping," reports Barbara. "Then he started developing bad migraine headaches. We went to a neurologist who did an MRI and told me the migraines were sinus-induced and that Tyler needed to go to an ENT."

Barbara knew exactly who to consult: board-certified otolaryngologist Devang M. Shah, MD, of Atlantic Ear, Nose & Throat.

"We had dealt with Dr. Shah when Tyler was three and had chronic ear infections," she explains. "I had a great experience with him then, so I went back."

Balloon Sinuplasty

"In the past, there were few good options for patients with chronic sinus conditions," notes Dr. Shah. "Over-the-counter medications only treat the

symptoms, while overuse of antibiotics has become a community-wide problem due to some bacteria developing resistance to standard antibiotic therapy. For many, all that's really needed is for the sinuses to be opened in order to relieve the problem."

However, the traditional surgical approach can be aggressive and lead to significant time away from school or work, notes the doctor.

Fortunately, now there is a happy medium between constant medications and invasive surgical intervention.

"Balloon Sinuplasty technology is an FDA-cleared, catheter-based system for patients suffering from sinusitis," says Dr. Shah. "The technology uses a small, flexible sinus balloon catheter to open up blocked sinus passageways, restoring normal sinus drainage and function."

Advancing the tiny catheter into the sinus cavity, the surgeon then places a sinus balloon into the area to be treated. When the balloon is inflated, it gently restructures and widens the walls of the passageway while still maintaining the integrity of the sinus lining.

"The safety profile of this procedure is one of its main benefits," notes Dr. Shah.



Barbara Costa and her son Tyler

"This is especially important in the pediatric population, where the sinuses are very small. Balloon Sinuplasty allows us to achieve a greater degree of safety while managing to open the sinuses and drain them adequately."

Breathe easy

Barbara says she appreciates how diligently Dr. Shah worked for a nonsurgical solution before even recommending Balloon Sinuplasty.

"He tried everything possible to help my son," she emphasizes. "Antibiotics seemed to help, but as soon as he came off them, the infection would come right back."

Balloon Sinuplasty was ultimately the best option.

"The procedure was a lot less intense than I thought it would be," adds Barbara. "The next day, Tyler acted like he'd never even had surgery!"

Most importantly, she says, it worked.

"It's been weeks, and Tyler hasn't been congested," Barbara marvels. "He's got his appetite back, and he's even starting to say he smells things better now. He's doing great."

She thanks Dr. Shah for suggesting the leading-edge procedure. "I have the utmost respect for Dr. Shah," assures Barbara. "He works very well with children, and I trust him wholeheartedly."

"This was the best thing I've ever done for my son," says Michael J. Sahnro.

Balloon Sinuplasty:

- Safe and Effective
- Minimally Invasive
- Faster Recovery
- Does Not Limit Future Treatment Options