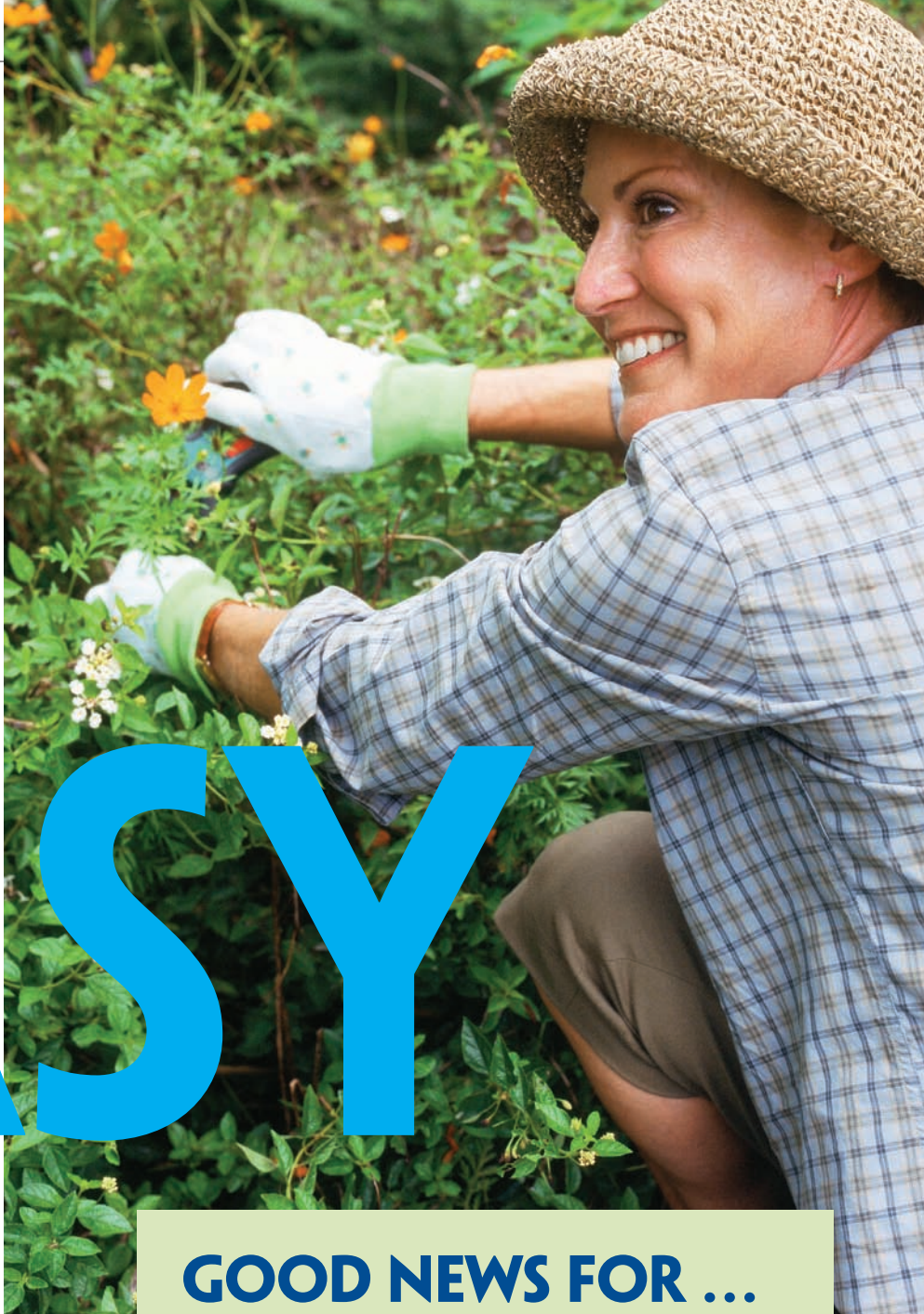


Sublingual immunotherapy offers **allergy sufferers** an effective alternative

# BREATHE EASY



Affinity Medical Group's ear, nose and throat specialists now offer allergy immunotherapy or sublingual immunotherapy (SLIT). Allergy immunotherapy uses allergy drops that can be taken at home and provide results similar to those achieved with allergy shots, by slowly desensitizing an allergic individual to the substance that causes his or her reactions.

"We are pleased to offer our patients allergy immunotherapy, or SLIT, that they can take at home," says Todd Meyer, DO, Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist at Affinity Medical Group. "Most allergy sufferers can benefit from allergy drops."

## MANY BENEFITS

There are several advantages to treating patients with allergy drops. The treatment is safe and effective for patients of all ages and, compared with shots, allergy drops cost less and require fewer visits to the doctor. The cost of drops is comparable to the price of an office visit copay, plus patients get to skip a weekly or monthly visit to the clinic.

Patients can take allergy drops wherever and whenever they need them, at home or away from home. Many patients report—and research confirms—that once they start taking allergy drops they need less medication to control their symptoms.

## GOOD NEWS FOR ...

Groups that may respond well to allergy drops include:

- + Infants and children.
- + Asthmatics.
- + People who are highly sensitive to medication.
- + People with chronic conditions such as sinusitis.
- + People with food and mold allergies.
- + People with multiple allergies (dust, pollen and animal dander).

For most patients, the end result of taking allergy drops consistently is overwhelmingly positive: They feel better, have fewer clinic visits and hospitalizations, and require less time off from work or school.

## HOW IT WORKS

With sublingual immunotherapy, the allergen is placed under the tongue in liquid form instead of being given in a shot. Like allergy shots, the allergy drops are taken each day for three to five years (depending on the severity

## STOP SUFFERING

For more information or a referral to Affinity Medical Group Ear, Nose and Throat, ask your provider or call Affinity Medical Group ENT at **(920) 730-4443**.



Todd Meyer, DO



Gregory Swanson, MD

and the seasonality of your allergies). Many patients report an improvement in allergy symptoms within a few months.

“SLIT is an excellent alternative to shots in patients who are unable to undertake [allergy shots],” says Gregory Swanson, MD, Ear, Nose and Throat Specialist with Affinity Medical Group, Appleton. “Patients who typically opt for SLIT include children who are afraid of needles, patients who travel frequently or those whose work schedules preclude weekly visits to a doctor’s office for shots.”


Immunotherapy dosing is carefully measured to treat each individual’s allergies, and most people notice improvement quickly. It may be tempting for patients to stop treatment once they start feeling better, but it is important that they continue treatment for the full course to ensure long-term effects.

Only a doctor who specializes in treating allergies should administer allergy treatments. Your doctor will examine you and test you for specific allergies and can develop a treatment program that’s just right for you.

### SAFE, EFFECTIVE RELIEF

Sublingual immunotherapy has been used around the world for more than 60 years, and studies show both its safety and effectiveness. The World Health Organization endorses sublingual immunotherapy as an alternative to injection therapy.

The Cochrane Collaboration, a trusted international organization dedicated to reviewing health care treatments, recently concluded that allergy drop immunotherapy significantly reduces allergy symptoms and the use of allergy medications. SLIT is not a homeopathic approach. Affinity Medical Group follows the American Academy of Otolaryngology Association panel guidelines and dosing protocols.

If you suffer from allergies, talk to your doctor about SLIT—most insurance companies cover the cost of tests and the office visit. Although most insurance does not cover the cost of the actual drops, the drops are affordable and most patients are happy to pay out of pocket for the long-term benefits and reduction of costs for managing their allergy symptoms. Consult your insurance representative for more information. 

## THE REASON FOR THE SNEEZIN’

**ALLERGY:** Seasonal

**Common Irritants:**

- ▶ Spring: tree pollen, grass pollen and mold spores.
- ▶ Late summer, fall: ragweed pollen and mold spores.

**Symptoms:** Sneezing, watery eyes, runny nose, nasal stuffiness, eye irritation, wheezing, aggravation of asthma, cold/flu-like symptoms, rashes and shortness of breath.

**Smart Measures:** Keep your house and car windows closed. Wash your hair before going to bed if you have been outdoors, where pollen can land on your hair, and wash pets that have been outdoors.

**Talk to Your Doc:** Medication or immunotherapy can provide much-needed relief.

**ALLERGY:** Food

**Common Irritants:** Peanuts, fish, shellfish, milk, eggs, tree nuts and wheat.

**Symptoms:** Headaches, skin rashes, abdominal cramping, difficulty breathing.

**Smart Measures:** Simple—avoid the food.

**Talk to Your Doc:** If the allergy is life-threatening, some doctors recommend carrying epinephrine, a potent nervous-system stimulant. It can buy you time to get to the hospital in the event that you ingest the food. Talk to your physician to determine if this treatment is appropriate for you.

**ALLERGY:** Pet dander

**Common Irritants:** Cats, dogs.

**Symptoms:** Runny nose and sinus congestion; itchy, red eyes; sneezing; rash or itchy skin; hives; shortness of breath; wheezing.

**Smart Measures:** Bathe the animal every other week or more frequently, keep it out of your bedroom and off your bed, and use a HEPA-filter vacuum or air filter to reduce the amount of allergens in your home.

**Talk to Your Doc:** If symptoms persist, your doctor can prescribe medication or provide further guidance that may be helpful. Immunotherapy also might be an option.

**ALLERGY:** Chemical

**Common Irritants:** Paint, carpet, perfumes, plastics, cigarette smoke.

**Symptoms:** Headaches, migraines, dizziness, nausea, anaphylactic shock, difficulty breathing, rashes and other skin eruptions.

**Smart Measures:** Avoid the chemical in question. Look for alternatives, such as wood or tile flooring instead of carpet.

**Talk to Your Doc:** Medications, including nasal steroids and inhalers, often are recommended.

