

CLINICAL PRACTICE GUIDELINES

PATIENT INFORMATION

TREATMENT OPTIONS FOR ALLERGEN IMMUNOTHERAPY (SCIT VS. SLIT)

Allergen immunotherapy (AIT) is a type of treatment used to reduce allergy symptoms and improve quality of life. AIT has been shown to be safe and effective for treating allergic rhinitis (hay fever). For allergens that are inhaled, AIT is usually administered using one of two methods:

- Subcutaneous immunotherapy (SCIT), which involves placing allergens under the skin with a needle
- Sublingual immunotherapy (SLIT), which involves using drops or tablets placed under the tongue

Both SCIT (shots) and SLIT (tablets and drops) are considered safe and effective. However, there are differences in associated risks and benefits, including efficacy, convenience, and cost. Patients should discuss the available options with their healthcare provider. For a more detailed comparison, please refer to the comparison table below.

COMPARISON OF SCIT AND SLIT FOR ALLERGIC RHINITIS

	SCIT (SHOTS)	SLIT (TABLETS)	SLIT (DROPS)
Safety	Higher risk of local and systemic (whole body) reactions relative to SLIT	Mild local and rare systemic reactions	Mild local and rare systemic reactions
Regulatory	Approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA)	Approved by the U.S. FDA	Not approved by the U.S. FDA and is considered "off-label"
Administration	Given in a doctor's office during regular clinic visits	Given in a doctor's office during first dose, at home after the first dose	Given in a doctor's office during first dose, at home after the first dose
Number of Allergens Delivered	Can be tailored to match all positive allergy tests	Limited to certain allergens like grass, house dust mites (HDM), or ragweed	Can include 1 to 10 allergens, but there's some debate and evidence is limited
Efficacy	Works better compared to SLIT	Not as effective as SCIT	Not as effective as SCIT
Cost	Insurance covered	Insurance covered	Usually out of pocket

Gurgel RK, Baroody, FM, Damask, CC, et al. Clinical Practice Guideline: Immunotherapy for Inhaled Allergy. *Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery*. 2024;170(S1):S1-S42.



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ABOUT THE AAO-HNS/F

The American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery (AAO-HNS) represents approximately 13,000 specialists worldwide who treat the ear, nose, throat, and related structures of the head and neck. The AAO-HNS Foundation works to advance the art, science, and ethical practice of otolaryngology-head and neck surgery through education, research, and quality measurement.