



Patient & Family Guide
2020

Low Dose Allergen Immunotherapy (LDA)



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What is LDA?

- Low Dose Allergen Immunotherapy (LDA) is used to treat inhalant (breathed in) allergies, food allergies, and food sensitivities. Symptoms of these allergies and sensitivities may include asthma, hives, and a skin condition called eczema.
- With LDA treatment, you will get a low dose of the allergen and an enzyme. The enzyme helps to stop the allergic response to the allergen.
- Patients being treated with LDA must follow strict guidelines for their environment, diet, and medications. **These guidelines must be followed in order for the treatment to work.** Before being treated with LDA, it may help to check your diet for foods that may be contributing to your symptoms. Sometimes changing your diet is enough to help your symptoms.

How often will I receive LDA?

LDA is given by injection with a needle. LDA injections are usually given every 2 months to start. Over time, the time between injections is slowly increased until they are given once a year. The health care team at Integrated Chronic Care Service (ICCS) will monitor this process closely and help you make changes as needed.

When will I start to notice changes?

- Changes happen at different times for each person. Some people notice changes right after the first injection, while others may not notice any until after the third or fourth injection.
- Once you start to notice changes, they will last from a few days to a few weeks, slowly increasing over time. You may need to have 6 to 8 injections before they start to last for most of the 2 to 3 months between injections. Your ICCS doctor will monitor your progress.
- **If you decide to have LDA treatment, we ask that you commit to being treated for at least 1 year, as it may take this long to start to see changes.**

What are the 4 critical days of LDA treatment?

The **4 critical days** of LDA treatment are:

- › the **day before your injection.**
- › the **day of your injection.**
- › the **2 days after your injection.**

How do I get ready for my injection?

- Read over the info you were given.
- Do not make any changes until you have met with the health care provider.

Pre-LDA phone call:

- Before your LDA appointment, a nurse will call you to review your current medications. **Please have all of your current medications and supplements that you take, or a list of them, ready for when the nurse calls.**
- If you have not had LDA before, the nurse will review the 4 critical days of LDA and the LDA diet with you. If you have any questions, please ask the nurse.

- Some of your medications may need to be changed during your LDA treatment to make sure they do not affect your treatment. A list of stop and restart dates, and any other medications you need, will be mailed to you before you start to get ready for LDA. The ICCS doctor will give you prescriptions for supplements and other medications on the day of your injection, if needed.

What do I need to do while getting LDA?

If you are getting injections for food allergens:

LDA Diet

- You must follow this diet for each of the **4 critical days: the day before your injection, the day of your injection, and 2 days after your injection.**
- **ONLY** the foods listed on the following page are allowed.
- **DO NOT** eat any other foods than the ones listed on the following page.

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Meat</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lamb or • Rabbit or • Venison (if rarely eaten) or • White, fresh fish only or • Buffalo or • Emu | <p>Vegetables</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sweet potatoes, yams • Parsnips, rutabagas, turnips, taro root • Cooked carrots, celery, cabbage • White potatoes • Lettuce (outer leaves only) • Rhubarb |
| <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plain tapioca (or cassava or sago) flour or powder • Pure baking soda (without additives) • Plain sea salt | <p>Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bottled or filtered |

Note: If you have hypoglycemia, you can take **fructose** in water, 1 to 2 teaspoons every 1 to 2 hours. **Do not use any other types of sugar.** Fructose is available at most health food stores in a crystal or powder form.

If you are having problems with this diet, please talk with the nurse.

LDA Diet rules:

- **DO NOT skip meals. This could change the effects of your injection.**
- Think of the foods on this list as ‘safe.’ For the first week after LDA, keep eating only those foods that you know are tolerable and safe for you. After the 4 critical days, you can start to add other foods **very slowly**. When you start to try new foods, add them slowly over time, eating very small amounts at a time.
- Eat a wide variety of foods after the 4 critical days.

Approved Personal Products

Only use the following products around the time of your LDA treatment:

- › **Shampoo:** liquid glycerin. This is available at BulkBarn® and local health food stores.
- › **Soap:** liquid glycerin. This is available at BulkBarn® and local health food stores.
- › **Mouth care:** baking soda **only**. **Do not use toothpaste or mouthwash.**
- › **Deodorant:** baking soda or crystal rock **only**.
- › **Other toiletries:** Use as little as possible.

- › Laundry: **DO NOT** do laundry during the 4 critical days.
- › **Washing dishes: DO NOT** wash dishes during the 4 critical days, if possible. If you must wash dishes, use **plastic** gloves.
- › **Creams, ointments, lotions (including homeopathic items): DO NOT** use during the 4 critical days.

What will happen on the day of my injection?

- Make sure you follow the diet and medication guidelines as reviewed in your pre-LDA phone call.
- When you come to the ICCS Clinic, register at the reception desk and pay for your injection.
- You will be given your injection. The mixture will cause a bump to form under your skin (called a wheal) where the needle went in (injection site).
- We will record on your chart:
 - › The dose you received
 - › The size of the bump at the injection site
 - › Any other side effects you have

- **You must stay in the Clinic for 30 minutes after your injection in case you have a reaction.**
- We will measure the injection site and your vital signs (for example, heart rate, blood pressure) before you leave.

For 1 week after your injection:

- **DO NOT** use creams, lotions, hairsprays, conditioners, or oils.
- **DO NOT** get a perm, hair colour, waves, or other hair treatments.
- **DO NOT** go to beauty salons, spas, etc.

What are the possible side effects of LDA?

- Most reactions to LDA are very minor. Allergic reactions are rare because the dose of allergens in LDA is small.
- You must stay in the Clinic for 30 minutes after your injection in case you have any reactions. After 30 minutes, we will measure the injection site and your vital signs. **No exceptions will be made. If you cannot stay for 30 minutes after your injection, please reschedule your appointment.**

- Possible reactions include:
 - › You may still have the same symptoms as before your treatment.
 - › The bump at the injection site may get bigger or smaller.
 - › Rarely, you may feel depressed. If this happens, you can take medication right before your next injection to stop this from happening. Please talk about this with the nurse or ICCS doctor before taking medication.
 - › You may feel tired.
 - › The injection site may be red, itchy, and/or swollen.

Note: Everyone is different and will respond differently to treatment. Since each person has different allergies, their treatment may be different than yours. Your ICCS doctor has chosen the treatment plan that is best for you.

If you have a new or minor reaction:

- Contact your primary health care provider or go to a walk-in clinic.
- Then contact ICCS to let us know.
 - › Nursing Line: 902-860-2032
 - › Front Desk: 902-860-3066

If you have a severe reaction:

Call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.

If you have symptoms after your treatment:

- Remember that you must avoid certain medications during the time of LDA (like over-the-counter pain medications, antihistamines).
- Symptoms usually start 2 to 5 hours after an injection and go away after a few days. If you have symptoms after one injection, it does not mean that you will have that symptom after every injection.

If you have any questions, please call the Nursing Line:

- › Phone: 902-860-2032

Appointments

LDA injection date: _____

If you are not able to keep your appointment, please call 902-860-2032 as soon as possible.

We will re-book you, so long as staff are available and the LDA materials have not expired. Please contact ICCS for more info about our no-show policy.

When should I NOT get my injection?

The date for your injection will need to be rescheduled if you have **any** of the following:

- You are in the first 5 days of a cold or other infection, or suspect you might be getting one.
- You are pregnant, think you may be pregnant, or are planning on becoming pregnant.
- You have taken pain medication (including Tylenol® or Advil®) or allergy medication (such as an antihistamine) in the last 4 days.
- You have just been immunized.
- You have taken any supplement or drug which may interfere with LDA. We will review your medications in the pre-LDA phone call.

- You have been to the dentist within 1 week (7 days). Do not book a dental appointment for 2 and a half weeks (17 to 18 days) after LDA if an anesthetic (freezing medication) will be used. It is OK to have a cleaning or check-up.
- You are being treated for food intolerances and have not followed the LDA Diet.
- You are wearing any scented products or have recently put cream near where you will be getting your injection.

Followup appointments

After each injection, you will have a followup appointment with the nurse by telephone. We will send you a letter with the date and time the nurse will call. If you have any questions or concerns before or after this appointment, please call ICCS at any time.

Are there any costs for this treatment?

- The cost for LDA depends on the number of patients receiving treatment that day. The cost is usually \$150 to \$200 per treatment.
- This fee lets ICCS recover the cost of the injection. It does not cover the cost of the doctors' or nurses' time.

**What are your questions? Please ask.
We are here to help you.**

**In Nova Scotia you can call 811 to talk with
a registered nurse about your health care
questions 24/7.**

Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <http://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

Nova Scotia Health Authority promotes a smoke-free, vape-free, and scent-free environment.

Please do not use perfumed products. Thank you!

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Prepared by: ICCS Clinic Staff

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.