

Allergy testing is usually recommended when a patient is seen complaining of chronic nasal congestion, mucus drainage, itchy eyes, sneezing, coughing, or ear fullness. The northeastern United States is traditionally one of the worst areas for allergies, and what people may believe are sinus problems may in fact be allergy problems and not sinus conditions that need surgery.

If you have symptoms of nasal congestion, clear mucus drainage (either from the front of your nose, or the back of your throat ie. *post-nasal drip*), itchy eyes, ear fullness or the need to “pop” your ears, and/ or sneezing, it is likely you have a significant allergy problem. It is important to realize you may have one, all, or a combination of the above because everyone’s expression of allergies is not the same.

If it is suspected you have an allergy problem, allergy testing may be recommended. Allergy testing includes a series of pin pricks just beneath the skin layers with the injection of most typical things in our area that can cause allergies. If it is found that you are allergic, it most likely be recommended to you that you consider allergy shots. This mainly pertains to the patient who has allergies to things in our environment at least 2-4 of the seasons of the year. Allergy shots are given to provide an “immunity” to things to which the patient might be allergic. They are typically given as weekly shots for five months followed by monthly shots for two and one half years. At the end of this time repeat testing is usually recommended. If the patient is fully improved, further shots are not usually recommended. If there is improvement (**APPROXIMATELY 80% OF OUR PATIENTS HAVE SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR SYMPTOMS AFTER 1-3 YEARS OF TREATMENT**), shots are usually recommended to continue. It is interesting to note that most of our patients feel such a dramatic improvement that they are hesitant to stop their shots!

It is important for everyone to understand that allergy shots do not CURE the patient from their allergy problem, but provide a significant chance that their allergy symptoms will be significantly less noticeable throughout the year requiring less daily medication. Remember, allergy problems are in your genes and may present at any point in your life. We see plenty of people whom have never had allergy problems until they were 60+ years of age and now are doing dramatically better with allergy shots. So don’t fall into the general thinking that your allergy/ sinus issues are there forever!