

YOUR GUIDE TO SERIAL ENDPOINT TITRATION **(SET TESTING)**

WHY YOU ARE SICK?

Why are so many people experiencing problems with allergies? Compare your immune system to a rain barrel, and the water level in that barrel represents all the stressors to your immune system. These stressors come in the form of exposures to chemicals, foods, pollens, pollution in all forms, etc. Other factors include increased stress, illness, and insufficient rest, little or no exercise, and subnormal nutrition. The level of the water barrel increases with each stressor. When the water overflows the barrel, the system is overloaded and begins to break down. The result is an overwhelmed immune system that can no longer function to keep us well. We then can develop allergic symptoms and many other health problems.

We can help reduce the water level in the barrel through proper nutrition, exercise, and rest. Along with these factors, some patients may require testing and treatment, as well as minor adjustments to their own environment.

The success of any treatment is usually directly proportional to your personal commitment to optimum health.

Our office is committed to helping you set and reach your goals for optimum health. We can provide you with information and assistance with any of the factors and treatments mentioned above. Working together, we can create positive changes in your overall health.

SET TESTING

Serial Dilution Endpoint Titration or SET testing is an accurate method for testing inhalants such as dusts, molds, pets, trees, weeds, and grasses. It is far more accurate than either a blood test or the older scratch test. It is particularly helpful in patients who have asthmatic or other respiratory symptoms. The method allows us to determine the weakest concentration of an allergen to which your body reacts. It is not used for either chemical or food sensitivities. The goal is to train your immune system to tolerate the allergens at full strength.

TESTING

The testing is done by an allergy nurse. She will inject each arm from the shoulder to just above the elbow with approximately 8 different allergens. The injections are given just under the skin and raise a small bump called a wheal. After 10 minutes the wheals are measured. Based on the growth of the wheal, we can determine the weakest dose that causes a positive reaction.

If the first series of injections does not cause a positive reaction, more injections of succeeding stronger doses are given until we provoke a positive wheal or determine the test to be negative.

In this manner we can test for dust and mold during one session, and weed, trees and grass allergies at another. Each session could involve 60-80 injections.

TREATMENT

Based on your results we will make a vial with the specific type and dilution of allergens to which you tested positive. You will then need to come in weekly for an injection(s). As your body tolerates the injections, the dose is increased. When your body is able to tolerate the full dose without reactions, the next vial is made stronger. The process continues until we have trained your body to tolerate the allergen at the strongest concentration.

Because the injection(s) may cause a rare systemic reaction, you will need to remain in the allergy room for 20 minutes following your injection(s). no exceptions can be made.

TIME AND COST

It takes about 2 hours to do each test.

The cost for SET testing is \$9.00 per injection or wheal. There is an additional nurse visit charge of \$30.00 per session. The average cost for a full session is \$500. - \$800.

The cost for treatment injections is \$29.00 each, for a second one given at the same time \$32.00. The five dose vial is \$60.00 making the maximum monthly cost for one injection treatment \$176.00.

Insurance coverage varies. We strongly recommend you contact your insurance company regarding your benefits for allergy testing, treatment, and supplies. Most insurance plans pay for at least a portion of the treatment cost.

You will also be instructed on any additional environmental changes needed. These need not be drastic – *you may keep your pet!*

RESULTS

After you are able to tolerate the injection(s) at full strength, the next goal will be to lengthen the time between injections, and eventually discontinue them. This process usually takes 1-2 years, with relief often received within months or even weeks.

Caution: Some patients are not able to tolerate increasing doses and must be maintained on injections on an on-going basis to be comfortable.

Missing weekly injections slows the process considerably. Missing injections for several months may result in a need to retest. You must decide before testing to commit your time, money and energy to feeling better. This form of treatment is not a quick fix. It takes commitment from both the doctor and the patient. However, many patients have found relief from symptoms for the first time in their life.

PREPARATION

Since we test many chemically sensitive patients, ***we will not test you if you are using any scented products.*** This includes scented deodorants, lotions, shampoos or hairspray. If in doubt, don't use the product.

Antihistamines and other related drugs interfere with test results. Please check with Dr. Epperly or our allergy department if you are taking any prescription or over the counter medication. Some drugs must be discontinued 2-4 weeks prior to testing.

Wear short sleeves or sleeveless top for testing. You may bring a sweater or sweatshirt to wear before and after testing.

You should eat before you come. You may only have bottled water during testing.

You may bring a book to read, but do not bring newspapers.

Since testing takes so long and children become easily bored, plan on leaving children not being tested at home.