

Canada approves Merck grass allergy immunotherapy

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Merck & Co. says it's won its first approval for its new immunotherapy tablet for grass allergies, from regulators in Canada.

The drug, called Grastek, gradually reduced [allergic reactions](#) to grass pollen, by desensitizing the immune system to the substance triggering the allergic reaction. Most [allergy](#) treatments just temporarily relieve sneezing, itching and other symptoms.

The world's third-biggest drugmaker, based in Whitehouse Station, N.J., has partnered with ALK-Abello to market it in North America. ALK-Abello sells it in Europe as Grazas.

In the U.S., the Food and Drug Administration is weighing approval of both Grastek and an immunotherapy tablet for ragweed allergies. The tablets dissolve under the tongue and are taken daily for a year or so.

They could become an alternative to months of uncomfortable allergy shots.

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