

Allergy shots effective for baby boomers suffering from seasonal allergies

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Recent years have seen an increase in those suffering from allergies, including baby boomers. And because older people tend to have additional chronic diseases, diagnosis and management of allergic rhinitis (hay fever) can be a challenge. A new study shows immunotherapy (allergy shots) reduced symptoms by 55 percent after three years of therapy, and decreased the amount of medication needed for relief of symptoms by 64 percent.

The study, in the *Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology*, the scientific publication of the American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology (ACAAI), randomly sorted 60 [hay fever](#) sufferers, aged 65 to 75 years, into two groups. The first group received allergy shots for three years, and the second group received a placebo.

"Older people who suffer from hay fever may have health challenges that younger people do not," said allergist Ira Finegold, MD, ACAAI past president. "Hay fever is often ignored in [older patients](#) as a less significant health problem because of diseases such as asthma, [coronary heart disease](#), depression and high blood pressure. Also, some [baby boomers](#) might not realize they have allergies, and their physicians might not suggest allergy shots. The research indicated that allergy shots were extremely effective for this group."

Although the guidelines for the diagnosis and treatment of allergic diseases rarely focus on older patients, according to the Polish study, hay fever is more common in patients over 65 years of age.

"It's important that allergy treatment methods commonly used in young people are also investigated for use in older patients," said allergist Gailen Marshall, MD, PhD, Editor-in-Chief, Annals of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology. "More and more allergists are expanding the age limit for allergy shots as the baby boomer generation enters their senior years. Although there are no doubts about the effectiveness of [allergy shots](#) for both adults and children, there hasn't been much research until now in older patients."

The study authors state the results of the study indicate an aging immune system doesn't significantly influence the effectiveness of immunotherapy.

Provided by American College of Allergy, Asthma, and Immunology

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