

# Freedom from **HOUSE DUST MITE**



Did you know that there are around 100,000 to 10 million mites inside a typical mattress?<sup>3</sup>



# ACARIZAX<sup>®</sup>

• Allergic Rhinitis • Allergic Asthma •

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You have been given this booklet because your doctor has recommended ACARIZAX for you. This booklet answers some common questions about ACARIZAX, but does not replace the advice of your healthcare professional. If you have any questions about your condition or its treatment, please speak to your doctor.

# UNDERSTANDING ALLERGIES

Allergies occur when a person's immune system reacts to substances that are normally harmless. These substances are called allergens. Allergic diseases can include asthma, allergic rhinitis and eczema, as well as food, insect and drug allergies.

## ABOUT HOUSE DUST MITE RESPIRATORY ALLERGY

### What is house dust mite respiratory allergy?

House dust mites are a common cause of allergy. House dust mites are small creatures that can't be seen with the naked eye. They feed on skin scales shed from humans and are most often found in bedrooms. When their waste products come into contact with a person's nose, lungs or eyes, an allergic reaction may occur.

Persistent respiratory allergy symptoms can impact everyday life.

This allergic reaction may present as allergic rhinitis (mainly affecting the nasal passage) and/or allergic asthma (mainly affecting the lower airway). Together, allergic rhinitis and allergic asthma are known as "respiratory allergy". People who are sensitive to house dust mite will usually experience symptoms of respiratory allergy throughout the year.

### **People who are sensitive to house dust mite may experience symptoms of allergic rhinitis such as:**

- Runny nose
- Blocked nose
- Itchy nose
- Sneezing
- Itchy, watery eyes

### **People sensitive to house dust mite may also experience allergic asthma. Symptoms of allergic asthma include:**

- Wheezing
- Shortness of breath
- Coughing
- Chest tightness

**People with poorly controlled allergic rhinitis may also develop allergic asthma.**

## How is house dust mite respiratory allergy treated?

### Allergen avoidance

It can be difficult to avoid house dust mites altogether, but measures such as dust mite, resistant covers for bedding, and washing bedding in hot water (60°C) may help to reduce exposure.

### Medicines to control symptoms

These medicines may help to reduce the symptoms of allergy (such as runny or blocked nose) but do not change the way the body reacts to the allergen. This means your symptoms may return if you stop taking them. Some examples of these medicines include antihistamines and corticosteroid nasal sprays.

These medicines may not be effective for everyone, and many people with persistent respiratory allergy find that they cannot get enough symptom relief with these medicines alone.

### Immunotherapy

House dust mite immunotherapy works by increasing your body's tolerance to house dust mite allergens (a process known as desensitisation). It involves administering controlled amounts of house dust mite allergen extract regularly over several years to help build up tolerance.

**Immunotherapy is the only treatment that targets the underlying cause of house dust mite allergy, not just the symptoms of allergic disease.**

**By allowing the immune system to become tolerant to these allergens, immunotherapy can reduce or stop your symptoms, even after you stop treatment.**

# ABOUT ACARIZAX

Your doctor has determined that you are allergic to house dust mite, and recommended ACARIZAX sublingual immunotherapy tablets.

## What is ACARIZAX?

ACARIZAX is a medicine used to treat allergic rhinitis and related allergic asthma caused by house dust mites. In adults (for allergic asthma and allergic rhinitis) and in adolescents (for allergic rhinitis), it is an immunotherapy treatment, and works by improving your body's tolerance to house dust mites, and in turn reduces your allergy symptoms over time. Your doctor will usually prescribe ACARIZAX to people whose allergy symptoms are not relieved well enough by commonly used medicines (such as antihistamine tablets). ACARIZAX comes in a tablet form that is taken by placing it under the tongue (sublingual).

Your doctor's decision to prescribe ACARIZAX is based on results from an extensive clinical development program.

**ACARIZAX may be able to help reduce your house dust mite allergy symptoms and the need for symptomatic medication.**



### A tablet that dissolves in your mouth

One ACARIZAX tablet is placed under the tongue, where it rapidly dissolves. These sublingual tablets are a quick and simple way for you to take immunotherapy at home, work or on the move, so your treatment can be incorporated into your busy daily life.



### An everyday treatment

It is important to take one ACARIZAX tablet every day until your doctor tells you to stop treatment.



### Easy to store

ACARIZAX tablets may be kept at room temperature, so they are convenient to store at home and can be carried with you when you need to travel.

Store the tablet blister pack in its carton, and keep in a cool dry place below 30°C. Keep out of the reach of children.

## How to take ACARIZAX?

Please make sure you follow the directions given to you by your doctor. The usual dose is one tablet once daily, taken at about the same time each day.

No dose adjustment is needed.



### Acarizax tablets dissolve in your mouth

Place the tablet under your tongue and allow it to remain there until dissolved.

Do not swallow for 1 minute and do not eat or drink for at least 5 minutes.

## DO'S AND DON'TS FOR TAKING ACARIZAX

### DO

- Wash and dry your hands before handling ACARIZAX
- Continue to take ACARIZAX for as long as your doctor tells you (treatment may continue for several years)
- Tell your doctor about all medicines you are taking

### DON'T

- Don't force the tablet through the foil packaging, as it may damage the tablet
- Don't swallow for 1 minute after the tablet dissolves
- Don't eat or drink for 5 minutes after taking ACARIZAX

## What to expect from ACARIZAX

### Does it work immediately?

ACARIZAX immunotherapy works by changing the way your body reacts to house dust mite allergens to gradually reduce or stop your allergic symptoms. Unlike treatments that may provide temporary relief of symptoms, you may need to take ACARIZAX every day for at least 14 weeks before you start to see a change in your symptoms; however, you will continue to see benefits over time.

It can be difficult to notice gradual changes in symptom severity and you may feel your treatment isn't working. It may help to keep a diary of your symptoms over time (a symptom tracker is included in this leaflet).

Do not stop taking the medicine unless your doctor tells you.

It may take at least 14 weeks to start to notice any treatment effects

### How long should I continue taking ACARIZAX?

Continue taking the medicine for as long as your doctor advises. You may need to take a tablet every day for several years to achieve the full effect of treatment.

Do not stop taking the medicine without consulting your doctors – even if you feel better.

#### HANDY TIPS FOR REMEMBERING TO TAKE YOUR ACARIZAX TABLET:



Make it part of your daily routine



Set up a reminder/alert on your phone



Leave yourself reminder notes

## Does ACARIZAX have any side effects?

ACARIZAX contains the house dust mite extract that you are allergic to, so some effects (particularly in the mouth/throat) can be expected during your treatment. These side effects are usually mild to moderate, and reduce over time as your immune system becomes more tolerant. Your doctor will give you the first tablet under medical supervision and then monitor you for at least 30 minutes. This gives you the opportunity to discuss possible side effects with your doctor.

In most cases the reactions:

- Start during the first few days of treatment, and usually within minutes of taking the tablet.
- Decrease with continued treatment.

The most common side effects are:

- Irritation of the throat
- Swelling of the mouth
- Itching of the mouth

If you experience any of these side effects and they bother you, please talk to your doctor.

He or she may recommend treatment (such as non-sedating oral antihistamine tablets) to help alleviate the symptoms.

Side effects usually subside when you persist with treatment. Talk to your doctor if you are concerned about side effects.

All medicines can have side effects. Sometimes they are serious, most of the time they are not. You may need medical attention if you get some of the side effects. Please review the product package insert for a complete list of side effects and what to do if you should experience them.

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## Will ACARIZAX help with my other allergies?

Your doctor has prescribed ACARIZAX because you are allergic to house dust mite. ACARIZAX works by increasing your tolerance to house dust mite allergens.

## Why do I need to tell other healthcare professionals that I'm taking ACARIZAX?

You should always tell your healthcare team (e.g. doctor, dentist, pharmacist) about any medicines you are taking (including over-the-counter medicines, herbal medicines and supplements), as some medicines may interfere with each other. Your healthcare professional will consider whether to continue or stop your treatment. Also tell your healthcare team about any allergies you have.

## Should I keep taking my other medicines that I have been using to control my allergies, as well as ACARIZAX?

Discuss taking other medicines to control symptoms with your doctor. ACARIZAX can be taken in combination with symptom relieving medications such as antihistamines and nasal sprays. You may find that you can reduce your symptom-relieving medication over time.

Always contact your doctor if you require medical advice or information about your treatment.

## What should I do if I forget to take a tablet?

If you forget to take a dose at your usual time, you can take it later in the same day. If you miss a dose, do not take a double dose to make up for the dose that you have missed. If you forget to take ACARIZAX and it has been **less than 7 days** since your last tablet, you can restart it as soon as you remember. However, if it has been **more than 7 days** since you last took ACARIZAX, contact your doctor before starting treatment.

### **I have asthma. Will ACARIZAX affect my asthma?**

ACARIZAX is used to help treat allergic asthma in people who also suffer from allergic rhinitis. Continue taking the asthma treatment your doctor has prescribed. You may find that you can reduce your asthma medication over time. Keep a note of your asthma symptoms and discuss with your doctor before making changes to your asthma medication.



### Who must not take ACARIZAX?

You doctor will determine if ACARIZAX is suitable for you before prescribing it. Before you start taking ACARIZAX, tell your doctor if you have any other illnesses, are taking any medicines (including over-the-counter medicines, herbal medicines and supplements), or are pregnant or breast feeding (or intend to be during treatment). Also tell your doctor if you have previously had a severe allergic reaction to house dust mite allergy treatment.

#### **Do not take ACARIZAX if:**

- You have an allergy to any of the 'Excipients' listed at the end of the product package insert
- You have poor lung function or your asthma has worsened over the last 3 months (as assessed by your doctor)
- You have asthma as well as an ongoing airway infection such as a cold or chest infection on the day you are to take the first dose of ACARIZAX. Your doctor may recommend delaying the start of your treatment until your cold or infection is better
- You have an illness which affects your immune system or have cancer
- You have recently had a tooth taken out, had other forms of mouth surgery, or have ulcers or infections in the mouth
- You are pregnant

**If you have any questions about your ACARIZAX treatment, speak to your doctor – they are there to help.**

# YOUR SYMPTOM TRACKER

You may want to keep track of your symptoms once you've started your treatment with ACARIZAX. Note down your symptoms each week and discuss these with your doctor at your next appointment.

<b>On a scale of 0-10, how severe are your symptoms?</b> 0 = No symptoms, not disruptive to daily life; 5 = some symptoms, somewhat disruptive to daily life; 10 = severe symptoms, majorly disruptive to daily life				<b>How many days of the week did you have to use other allergy medicines?</b> (Make note of what you took)	<b>Other notes and comments</b>
<b>Week commencing</b>	<b>Overall symptoms</b>	<b>Daytime symptoms</b>	<b>Night-time symptoms</b>		

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# GLOSSARY

**Allergen:** A substance that causes an allergic reaction.

**Allergic asthma:** Inflammation of the airways that is triggered by inhaling allergens.

**Allergic rhinitis:** Inflammation of the lining of the nose that is triggered by inhaling allergens.

**Allergy:** An immune system response to a substance that is normally harmless to most people.

**Antihistamines:** A group of medicines that block the action of histamine in the body, used to relieve the symptoms of allergy.

**Corticosteroids:** A group of medicines that reduce inflammation/swelling, used to treat allergic conditions, or inflammation due to any cause.

**Desensitisation:** See 'immunotherapy'.

**Immunotherapy:** A type of allergy treatment that changes the way the immune system reacts to allergens, by 'switching' off the allergy. Also known as 'desensitisation'.

**Preventers:** A term used to describe asthma medicine that helps to reduce inflammation/swelling and mucus in the airways.

**Relievers:** A term used to describe asthma medicine that helps to relax the muscles in the airways.

**Respiratory allergy:** A term that encompasses both allergic rhinitis and allergic asthma.

**Sublingual:** A term to describe a medicine that is placed under the tongue

**Reference:**

1. ACARIZAX PI
2. ACARIZAX Product Monograph
3. <http://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/health/dangers-of-dust-mites-6-things-to-know-about-these-tiny-bugs-lurking-in-your-home>

This information leaflet is given to patients who are prescribed the medication by their doctor.  
For further queries, please consult the doctor.



**Abbott Laboratories (S) Pte Ltd.**

3 Fraser Street, #23-28 DUO Tower, Singapore 189352  
Tel: +65 6914 8000 Fax: +65 6914 8001