

Intravenous Immunoglobulin (IVIG)

What is immunoglobulin?

An immunoglobulin is also known as an antibody. It is a protein made by plasma cells (part of the blood). It is an important part of the immune system. Antibodies help to fight off infection. Normal human immunoglobulin is collected from a large pool of donated plasma.

What is IVIG?

Immunoglobulins are collected from the plasma of donated blood. It takes plasma from thousands of people to make a dose of immunoglobulin. IVIG is given by intravenous (IV) infusion. The patient's body then uses the antibodies from the infusion to prevent or fight an illness.

There are many brands of IVIG available which contain different levels of certain antibodies. Your care team will choose the IVIG that has the best mix of antibodies for your needs.

What is IVIG used for?

- Helps patients with poorly functioning immune systems (i.e., transplant patients, hematologic conditions such as Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia) fight off a variety of infections.
- Treats idiopathic thrombocytopenic purpura (ITP), a disease that leads to a risk for bleeding.

How is IVIG given?

IVIG is given through an intravenous (IV) infusion. The length of the infusion will depend on the brand of IVIG used, how you tolerate the infusion, and the protocol at the hospital or infusion center.

The infusion is generally started at a slow rate for a period of time. If you do not have any reaction, the rate can be increased. Your nurse will observe you throughout the infusion for reactions.

There are some immunoglobulin products that are given at home by an injection into the muscle (IM) or under the skin (subQ).

What are the potential side effects of this medicine?

If you experience any of these signs, contact your healthcare team immediately:

- anaphylactic (allergic) reaction
- difficulty breathing
- tightness in the chest or throat
- swelling of the face, tongue or throat
- drop in blood pressure

- flushing, hives
- rash
- dizziness
- sweating
- nausea and vomiting
- infection

Other common side effects include:

- headache
- fever
- chills
- nausea
- achy muscle
- In rare cases, IVIG can cause kidney problems or blood clots

If you experience any side effects, report them to your healthcare team.

Is there anything else to consider while getting this medicine?

IVIG is made from blood products, so there is a small risk of the medicine being contaminated with an infectious agent. However, several steps are taken during the manufacturing process to prevent this from happening.

- You should talk to your healthcare team before getting any **live** vaccines. Live vaccines include: herpes zoster (Zostavax[®]) for shingles prevention, varicella vaccine (Varivax[®]), oral polio, measles, nasal flu vaccine (FluMist[®]), rotavirus, and yellow fever.
- Tell your healthcare team if you are sick or are being treated for an infection. In some cases, the IVIG infusion may be delayed to allow the infection to resolve.

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If you are in need of immediate assistance, please call 732-235-2465 and select the option that best meets your needs.