



IVIG *Facts* FOR OUTPATIENTS

What is IVIG?

Intravenous Immune Globulin (IVIG) is a blood product that contains antibodies in a concentrated form. It is made from plasma collected from human blood donors. There are several different brands of IVIG in Canada and they are all similar in effect.

Risks

IVIG is considered to be a safe blood product with a low risk of transmitting disease. Blood donors are carefully tested before they donate, and during manufacturing IVIG is treated to destroy the viruses that cause HIV, Hepatitis B and Hepatitis C.

Why am I getting it? What does it do?

IVIG is used to replace antibodies in patients that have lower than normal levels (e.g. Primary Immunodeficiency). These antibodies help to fight infections. It can also be used to treat other conditions, some in which the body attacks its own tissues or organs (e.g. autoimmune disease). Ask your doctor to explain your individual treatment with IVIG.

How is it given?

Your doctor will ask you to give your consent for blood transfusion. Your nurse will start an intravenous (IV) line. IVIG is given through a vein in your arm or hand. It is a clear liquid that comes in glass bottles or plastic bags and is given slowly over several hours. Your nurse will check your vital signs (blood pressure, temperature and pulse) before and during the infusion.

Side effects

Side effects from IVIG usually occur during or up to 24 hours following infusion and tend to be mild and short lived. Patients who are well hydrated before infusion seem to have fewer side effects.

5-10% of patients experience minor side effects related to the rate of transfusion, these can often be reduced by slowing the rate of infusion and giving other medications such as Tylenol® or Benadryl®.

Seek immediate, emergency medical attention if you experience:

- Severe headache, eye pain, extreme drowsiness.
- Facial and/or tongue swelling
- Shortness of breath, chest tightness
- Changes in urine colour (red urine, dark coloured urine)
- Intense back pain

It is important to report any of these symptoms to your doctor or nurse. If this happens after you have returned home it is important to notify your caregivers either immediately or at next clinic visit.