## How can I reduce my chances of a reaction?

- **Allergies** – Your doctor needs to know if you are allergic to anything such as foods, preservatives, and dyes. Also if you have ever had an allergic reaction to immune globulin in the past. Hives, itching, and swelling are common signs of an allergy.
- **Medicines** – Make sure you tell your doctor about all the medicines you are taking. This includes herbal and natural remedies and supplements. Medicines could affect how the immune globulin works.
- **Blood clots** – Tell your doctor if you have ever had a blood clot. This can increase the chances of you getting a blood clot from the treatment.
- **Breastfeeding** – It is not known whether immune globulin passes through breast milk. Mothers who are getting this treatment and want to breastfeed should talk with their doctor.

## For more information

Every vial of immune globulin comes with an information sheet for patients. You can read more about it, including the benefits and risks.

If you have any worries or concerns about this treatment, speak to your nurse or doctor.

Helpful website: primaryimmune.org

www.fraserhealth.ca

This information does not replace the advice given to you by your healthcare provider.

Catalogue #256023 (February 2017)
To order: patienteduc.fraserhealth.ca

# Intravenous Immune Globulin (IVIg)

Common Questions

fraserhealth

## What is 'immune globulin'?

In our blood, we have white blood cells and antibodies. Antibodies are special proteins called immune globulin. Together, they find and destroy germs such as bacteria and viruses, protecting our bodies from infection. Sometimes our natural antibodies are not enough to fight the infection.

Immune globulin (Ig) is a blood product. It is made from plasma collected from human blood donors.

## Why is this blood product given?

Immune globulin is often given to people whose bodies cannot make their own antibodies. If a person is born not making antibodies, it is called a primary immunodeficiency or P.I.D.

Immune globulin is also used to treat some diseases that cause a person's body to attack its own tissues and organs.

Your doctor explains this treatment, why is being given to you, the risks, and other options for treatment. You might be asked to sign a consent form after you agree to this treatment.

## How it immune globulin given?

For most people, this treatment is done in a hospital day clinic.

Immune globulin is given through an intravenous (or I.V. for short). This is why we call it 'IVIG'.

An intravenous is inserted into a vein in your hand or arm. The immune globulin is given slowly over several hours. There are several brands approved for use in Canada. The brands we use can vary, depending on what is available. All the brands work the same way, however, some take longer to give than others.

The number of treatments you get depends on your medical condition and body size.

Your doctor might request a blood test to measure your blood antibodies. Depending on the result, your treatments could be adjusted or possibly stopped.

## Is this blood product safe?

Yes. Immune globulin is considered one of the safer blood products. The chances of getting an infection from immune globulin are extremely small. People are carefully tested before they can donate blood. Also, as part of making immune globulin, it is treated to remove bacteria and viruses (such as hepatitis and HIV).

## Are there any side effects to getting this treatment?

Common side effects can include headache, muscle pain, fever, chills, backache, feeling sick to the stomach, and/or throwing up. Usually the effects are mild and do not last long.

If you notice any of these while getting your treatment, **tell your nurse or doctor right away.** These effects can often be reduced by slowing your intravenous down and giving medicines to relieve the effect.

Your side effects might change depending on the brand of IVIG used. It is a good idea to take note of the brand given to you and how you feel in the weeks following your treatment. This way, your doctor can see which brand works best for you.

Serious reactions are rare but have been known to happen. These include:

- severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis)
- blood clots (thrombo-embolism)
- severe headache, eye pain, and drowsiness (aseptic meningitis)
- damage to red blood cells (hemolytic anemia)
- injury to kidneys (kidney failure)

Your doctor reviews your medical history to see if you might be at risk for any of these serious reactions.