

## **Intravenous Immune Globulin Fact Sheet**

### What is Intravenous Immune Globulin?

Intravenous Immune Globulin (also called IVIG) is a clear liquid made from plasma. Plasma is the liquid part of your blood. Plasma comes from human blood donors. IVIG has antibodies that help you to fight infections.

### What is Intravenous Immune Globulin (IVIG) used for?

IVIG is used to treat autoimmune diseases, and IVIG is also used to treat secondary immune deficiency.

In your body, you have white blood cells and antibodies called immune globulins that find and get rid of bacteria and viruses. This protects your body from infections. When your body does not make enough immune globulins you have secondary immunodeficiency.

### How is IVIG given to you?

A nurse will put an intravenous (IV) line into a vein in your arm. The IVIG is a clear liquid that will be given to you through this IV line. This is called an IVIG infusion.

A nurse will check your blood pressure, temperature, and heart rate before your IVIG infusion is started, and a few times while you are getting the IVIG.

The time it takes to have your IVIG infusion is based on how much IVIG you are supposed to get, and your health. Your IVIG will be given to you slowly if you have heart disease. This will help lessen the workload on your heart.

Some patients will need to have IVIG infusions every four weeks, based on the reason why they need the IVIG.

### What are the risks of IVIG infusions?

Your risk of getting a disease from IVIG is very low. Blood donors are carefully screened and their blood is tested by Canadian Blood Services. The IVIG is treated to kill most viruses (such as Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Hepatitis B, and Hepatitis C) before it is given to you.

IVIG can sometimes cause the breakdown of your red blood cells. This is very rare. If this happens, you could become anemic, meaning you will not have enough healthy red blood cells and you may need a blood transfusion.

About five to ten per cent of people who get IVIG have mild side effects. If you have these side effects, it will happen in the first 24 hours after you have your IVIG infusion.

This is a list of side effects you could have from IVIG:

- Headache or migraine headache
- Pain in your back or stomach
- Feeling flushed
- A fever or chills
- Changes in your blood pressure
- Wheezing in your chest
- Upset stomach or throwing up
- Feeling itchy or having a skin rash

Tell your nurse if you have any of these side effects while you are getting your IVIG infusion. The nurse may slow down the IVIG infusion and give you other medications to treat your side effects, such as a mild pain medication, or a medication for itching.

Your doctor will talk to you about the very rare side effects that some people have. This includes aseptic meningitis, severe allergic reaction, and blood clots.

If you have any side effects after you leave the hospital, please tell us at your next visit. We need to keep track of this information in your hospital chart.

Serious side effects or reactions are rare.

**If you have any of the following side effects, please go to the emergency department right away, or call 911:**

- Severe headache or severe pain in your eye(s)
- You feel very sleepy
- You have swelling on your face or your tongue
- You feel very short of breath or your chest feels tight
- Your urine is red or brown in colour
- Your skin or eyes are yellow