

Intravenous Immune Globulin

How to use this medication

What is it



Intravenous Immune Globulin (IVIG) is a blood product used to treat autoimmune conditions such as vasculitis, lupus, and myositis.

Given by intravenous (IV) infusion



IVIG is given by an intravenous infusion (IV) by a trained nurse. Each infusion can take from 2 to 6 hours.

Given every month



IVIG is given daily for 1 to 5 days a month.

Give it some time



Although some patients can feel better quite quickly after receiving the medication, in others it can take a little longer.

What you need to do

Get regular blood tests



You should have a blood test before starting IVIG. This is to check that your antibody levels (IgA) are not low. You should have regular blood tests to check your blood counts, kidneys, and liver.

Call if you develop a fever



IVIG is a blood product and there is a risk of getting an infection. People donating IVIG are carefully screened to lower the risk of infection.

Side effects & important facts

Infusion reaction



IVIG can rarely cause an allergic reaction during the infusion. Your doctor will likely give you Tylenol & Benadryl before your infusion to reduce the risk of a reaction.

Shortness of breath



Some patients can experience shortness of breath or chest discomfort with IVIG. This is due to fluid build up. Let your doctor know if this happens.

Blood pressure



IVIG can cause an increase in blood pressure. Your doctor will monitor this. Tell your doctor if you have high blood pressure.

Headache



Headache is one of the commonest side effects to IVIG. Most headaches go away after 24-48 hours. IVIG can induce migraine headaches. It can rarely irritate the lining of the brain (meningitis).

Fever & flu-like symptoms



When receiving IVIG, some patients have developed a fever and flu-like symptoms including "feeling out of sorts", chills, fatigue, and weakness.

Blood clots & vascular disease



IVIG has rarely been associated with an increased risk of blood clots. Other vascular problems such as strokes & heart attacks have been reported in patients receiving high doses of IVIG.

Skin rash



IVIG can rarely cause a skin rash.

Kidneys



IVIG has been linked to sudden kidney failure. This happens when IVIG is given in a sugar (sucrose) mix. Most IVIG used does not contain sucrose.

When should I call my doctor

Please call if you need to stop

- If you feel sick and want to stop
- If you are concerned about any side effects



Other reasons to call your doctor:



Fever or think you have an infection



If you have a severe headache



If you feel short of breath or chest pain



If you develop a rash



New swelling in a leg or arm