

Does IVIG affect pregnancy or breastfeeding?

Data from clinical trials suggest that IVIG has an acceptable safety profile for both mother and the foetus. IVIG treatment is not given during pregnancy, unless this is absolutely necessary. IVIG can be excreted into the milk and be transferred to the child by breastfeeding.

Can I have immunisations while on IVIG?

IVIG treatment may interfere with vaccinations. It is best to wait at least six weeks after receiving IVIG treatment before having any vaccinations.

Are there any alternatives to Azathioprine?

Your doctor will advise you on the safest and most effective option. If you have any concerns, do raise them with your doctor.

National University Hospital

5 Lower Kent Ridge Road, Singapore 119074
Website: www.nuh.com.sg

Company Registration No. 198500843R

Pharmacy (Main Building): 6772 5181/5182
Pharmacy (Kent Ridge Wing): 6772 5184
Pharmacy (NUH Medical Centre): 6772 8205

The information provided in this publication is meant purely for educational purposes and may not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. You should seek the advice of your doctor or a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical conditions. Information is correct at time of printing and subject to revision without prior notice.

Copyright 2014. NationalUniversityHospital

All Rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced without permission in writing from the NationalUniversityHospital.

Medication Information for Patients

INTRAVENOUS IMMUNOGLOBULIN (IVIG)



Why am I being prescribed IVIG?

IVIG is a blood product, manufactured from plasma (the liquid part of the blood that does not contain blood cells). It is used to treat immunodeficiency or autoimmune diseases, including some neurological disorders like myasthenia gravis or nerve disorders. It is also used in a selected group of patients with recurrent pregnancy losses.

IVIG contains immunoglobulins that can replace antibodies (natural body proteins that fight infection). In immunodeficiencies, IVIG boosts the immune system, while in autoimmune diseases, IVIG 'readjusts' some parts of the 'over-active' immune system. Other uses include prevention of organ rejection and idiopathic thrombocytopenia (low platelet counts).

How am I given IVIG?

It is given via an infusion into a vein (through a needle attached to a tube connected to the bottle of IVIG). This may take several hours.

When do I take IVIG?

The number and frequency of IVIG infusions depends on your condition. In some autoimmune diseases, IVIG is given only when complications arise.

When does IVIG work?

While some patients feel better rapidly after administration of IVIG, it may not work immediately for some. It can take two to four weeks after the infusion before you notice any benefit.

What are the possible side effects I can expect while having IVIG?

There are a few side effects with IVIG and it is usually related to the dose and how fast it is given. Most reactions tend to occur *during* the infusion, and occasionally a few days after. These occur in up to 10% of patients and include fever, headaches, muscle aches and nausea. Some of these reactions can be managed by slowing the rate of infusion, or by administering other medications.

Inform your doctor if you experience the following:

- Fever
- Rash
- Headache
- Nausea and vomiting
- Tiredness
- Swelling or pain and redness of the legs
- Breathlessness
- Dark urine, yellow eyes
- Reduced urination or sudden weight gain

What are the risks of IVIG?

There is a very small risk that blood-borne infections may be passed on during the infusion.

In the past, a small number of people who received IVIG became ill with hepatitis. Today, products are carefully screened and treated to prevent transmission of the hepatitis virus and other viruses. There have been no documented cases of the transmission of the virus that causes AIDS (HIV) through IVIG.

There is also a small chance that you will have a severe allergic reaction to IVIG. If that happens, IVIG will be stopped. Medications to treat allergic reactions will be given immediately.

There is also a small risk of meningitis (inflammation of the brain lining) and you should inform your doctor if you have a severe headache or weakness. In some individuals, IVIG can also result in kidney problems, strokes, heart attacks, or the formation of abnormal blood clots in the body. Your doctor will discuss with you the use of IVIG if you are at risk.

Do I have to undergo any tests while on IVIG?

Please consult your doctor for more information. Generally, your doctor will do blood tests to monitor your underlying disease to decide on the need for further doses.