

Understanding IgG

additional treatment and a nurse closely monitors and addresses all side effects as needed during treatment.

It is not unusual for patients to feel like they have dramatically improved symptoms in just a short time. Many conditions, however, require many doses and months under guidance to see full benefits.

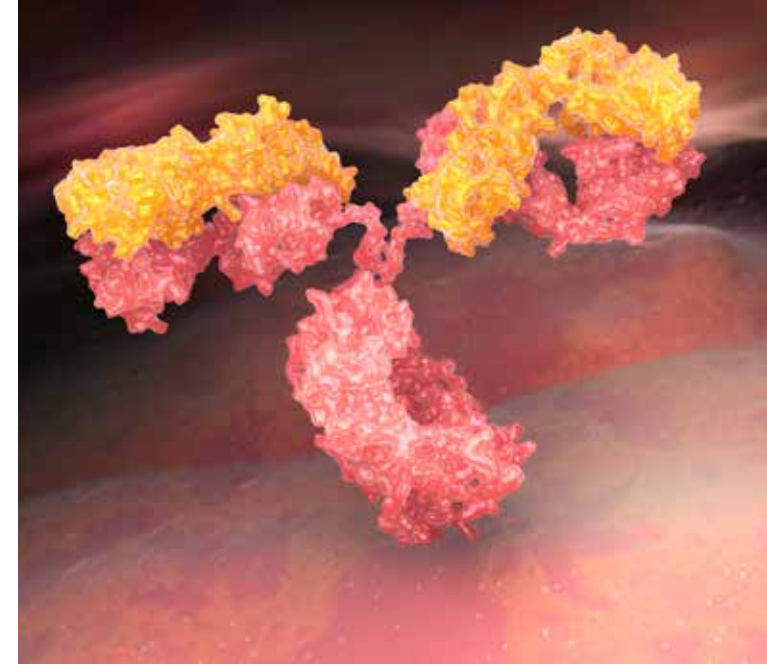
Patients should stay well-hydrated before an infusion and a doctor will most likely advise an increase in fluid intake before, during and after IgG treatment. A doctor may also prescribe additional medicines to take before treatment to counteract side effects.

How do I learn more?

Contact your doctor or nurse to discuss specific questions about IVIg or your personal treatment.

For additional information, please access the Allergy & Immunology Awareness Program (AIAP) site:

<http://aiap.hamad.qa>



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What is Immunoglobulin (IgG)?

Immunoglobulin (also called Immune Globulin, IVIg, IgG, Ig or Gamma Globulin) is a medicine that contains antibodies, like the ones the body makes naturally to identify germs and defend it against infection. These antibodies are taken from the blood of thousands of healthy blood donors, shipped to a pharmaceutical plant, purified and combined into a fluid to make each dose of IgG.

When is it necessary to receive IgG?

The immune system is responsible for defending the body from harmful germs, which could make a person sick. This defense system is extremely complex, with many different parts.

One important part of the immune system is a tiny protein called an antibody. The immune system makes antibodies that travel through the blood stream looking for germs. When an antibody finds a germ, it creates a chemical reaction that lets the rest of the immune system know that a harmful intruder is in the body. The body then activates its defenses to destroy the germ.

IgG is often used to treat people suffering from immune-related medical disorders. In people with these types of illnesses, it is believed that IgG may replace missing antibodies or boost existing immune defenses. Other immune-related disorders occur when a person's antibodies mistake normal, healthy parts of the body for harmful germs, causing the body to attack and damage itself. IgG is thought to block these "bad" antibodies.

What disorders can be treated with IgG?

IgG is approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) to treat the following disorders:

- Allogeneic Bone Marrow Transplant
- Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia
- Idiopathic Thrombocytopenic Purpura (ITP)
- Pediatric HIV
- Primary Immunodeficiency (PID)
- Kawasaki disease
- Chronic Inflammatory Demyelinating Polyneuropathy (CIDP)
- Kidney transplant with a high antibody recipient or with an ABO incompatible donor

Physicians have used IgG in many areas when other therapies have failed. Some of these include:

- Autoimmune/Immunology
- Neurology
- Oncology
- Dermatology
- Transplant

Some of these disorders are extremely rare and treatment is undertaken only under the strict guidance and direction of specialized physician experts.

How is IgG treatment given?

IgG can be administered through intravenous infusion, meaning "through the vein." When administered in this form, the treatment is called Intravenous Immunoglobulin or IVIg.

IVIg is administered through a narrow tube. One end of the tube is inserted into a person's vein with a small needle, while the other end is connected to a bag containing IgG and any necessary diluents. IgG cannot be taken orally because the medicine would be digested and destroyed in the stomach.

Many patients will receive the first dose of IgG from a specially trained nurse in a hospital, doctor's office or specialized infusion suite. Subsequent IgG treatments can be given in the comfort of the patient's home.

For lower doses, IgG also can be given as a series of injections just under the skin. This is called Sub-Cutaneous Immunoglobulin or SCIg. Patients receiving SCIg are trained by a nurse to administer the injections themselves, which are injected with a hand-held pump through a tube.

How does it feel?

IgG treatment is usually given over the course of 1 to 5 days. Patients undergo 1 treatment session per day, which may last between 2 and 8 hours depending on the dosage. Treatments may be given weekly, monthly or every few months, depending on the disorder and the patient's condition. IgG remains in the body for 2 to 12 weeks, depending on the dosing and the patient.

Side effects are typically mild, but can become severe in rare cases. During treatment, patients may feel unwell, experience shivers, develop headaches or see a slight rise in blood pressure. Side effects usually become less frequent and milder with each