



# Intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIg) infusions

## Patient information

This patient fact sheet answers some common questions about immunoglobulin (IVIg) infusions. Your doctor has recommended IVIg for you so should have discussed why this treatment has been suggested and obtained your written consent to carry it out. If you still have questions after reading this, please talk to the midwife, nurse or doctor.

### What are immunoglobulins?

Immunoglobulins, also known as antibodies, are proteins found in the plasma of the body. Plasma is the liquid in blood that does not contain red blood cells. Immunoglobulins are a part of your immune system that fight infection and diseases.

IVIg is made from human plasma donations.

### Why do I need an immunoglobulin infusion?

IVIg is used to treat a wide range of conditions affecting the immune system.

This could mean an overactive or underactive immune system, as well as some inflammatory conditions.

Please drink 1-2 litres of water prior to treatment.

Drink water throughout the infusion and also keep well hydrated following treatment.

### What does intravenous infusion mean?

Intravenous infusion means giving something directly into the body through a vein. A plastic cannula is placed into a vein and attached to a glass vial containing IVIg and run via plastic tubing. The dose of IVIg is specifically for you, as prescribed by your haematologist/doctor and can take anywhere between two and 8 hours to infuse.

### Before commencing IVIg

Advise your midwife/nurse/doctor if you:

- Are unwell or receiving treatment for an infection
- Are on any medications
- Have had a reaction to any blood product in the past
- Require blood tests
- Have other appointments on the day
- Require a medical certificate

IVIg is administered in the KEMH Infusion Unit on Tuesday, Thursday or Friday, starting at 7.30am or 8am.

## Possible side effects of IVIg

Some patients may have side effects from IVIg infusions. Symptoms may occur up to three days after the infusion, are usually mild, can last over a few days and can be relieved by simple medications.

Symptoms include:

- Raised temperature
- Headache
- Rash
- Nausea and/or vomiting
- Diarrhoea
- Muscle and joint pain
- Fatigue.

Severe side effects of an allergic reaction are possible but rare, and these include:

- Shortness of breath
- Wheezing
- Tongue/throat swelling
- Skin rash
- Dizziness
- Low blood pressure
- Chest tightness.

Whilst in the Infusion Unit you will be closely monitored by staff for any side effects or signs of a reaction. Please inform them immediately if you feel unwell at any stage during the infusion.

At home, if you are concerned about any side effects contact the clinical nurse consultant, Patient Blood Management/Haematology on (08) 6458 2733 (Monday to Friday, 7am-3.30pm) for advice.

### You can also contact:

- **Maternal Foetal Assessment Unit (MFAU) 24 hrs per day**, if you are over 20 weeks pregnant, on (08) 6458 2199
- **Health Direct** 1800 022 022.

**If you have chest pain, difficulty breathing,  
or neck/mouth swelling**

**Seek urgent medical attention.  
Call an ambulance on 000.**



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## Women and Newborn Health Service

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