

# Intravenous Immunoglobulin (IVIG)

## What is intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIG)?

- IVIG is a collection of antibodies. Antibodies help your body fight infection. IVIG comes from the plasma (part of the blood) of thousands of different donors.
- IVIG is available under many brand names (like Gamunex<sup>®</sup>, IGIVnex<sup>®</sup>, Gammagard Liquid<sup>®</sup>, and others).

## How is IVIG given?

- IVIG is given through an IV tube in your arm that goes directly into a vein.

## What are the benefits?

- This medication is helpful for:
  - › some people who have weak immune systems (ability to fight infections). IVIG helps your body fight infections when your own antibodies are not working well enough.
  - › people who have some autoimmune (your antibodies attack your body) diseases. IVIG helps to prevent your immune system from attacking your normal tissues.



## What are the possible side effects?

- Possible side effects include:
  - › Headache
  - › Fatigue (tiredness)
  - › Fever (temperature above 38<sup>0</sup> C/100.4<sup>0</sup> F)
  - › Chills
  - › Skin rash
  - › Fast heart rate
  - › Nausea (upset stomach)
  - › Vomiting (throwing up)

Your doctor or nurse practitioner may prescribe medication to prevent or treat these side effects.

- **Rare** side effects may include:
  - › Kidney failure
  - › A blood clot in a vein
  - › Low blood counts
  - › Aseptic meningitis (inflammation of the covering of the brain)

IVIg is carefully prepared so that it does not have any viruses or other germs. The risk of infection from IVIg treatment is very low.

### Looking for more health information?

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here: <https://library.nshealth.ca/PatientEducation>

Contact your local public library for books, videos, magazines, and other resources.

For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time: call 811 or visit <https://811.novascotia.ca>

Learn about other programs and services in your community: call 211 or visit <http://ns.211.ca>

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