IV Immune Globulin Treatment (IVIG)

Your neurologist has ordered I.V. immune globulin (IVIG) for the treatment of your multiple sclerosis. Immune globulins are manufactured from human plasma and might slow down or stabilize the MS disease process.

The treatment will take place at the Mellen Center every day for one to five days. The appointment office at the Mellen Center will arrange your appointment dates and times. For appointment information, please call 216.444-8600 or 1.800.223.2273, ext. 48600.

Before your treatment

- Your neurologist will discuss the benefits and side effects with you and your family.
- Tell your doctor if you:
  - Are allergic to any medicine
  - Are pregnant or intend to become pregnant while receiving this treatment
  - Are taking other prescription or non-prescription medicine
  - Have had a reaction to blood or blood products in the past
- Your weight will be obtained to determine the dose of the medicine. The amount of IVIG given is based on your weight.
- Your neurologist will order blood tests to obtain a baseline and to determine your eligibility for this treatment.

What can I expect on the day of my treatment?

- Immune globulins are given intravenously through an infusion pump.
- The nurse will give pre-medicines, if ordered.
- Your blood pressure, pulse, and temperature will be taken before, during, and after treatment.
- Expect to be at the Mellen Center for 4 to 8 hours each day of your treatment, depending
on the dose and rate of infusion. Due to the length of the treatment, you might want to bring your lunch.

What are the possible side effects of IVIG treatments?
As with any treatment, there are risks of a reaction or hypersensitivity. The nurse will observe you for any reactions, and check your blood pressure, pulse, and temperature. Slowing the rate of the infusion might reduce the side effects. Hypersensitivity reactions are not common and can be managed by medicine.

Common side effects
Alert the nurse if you experience any of the following:

- Minor headache
- Fever
- Chills
- Nausea/vomiting
- Rapid or pounding heart beat

After a day or two of treatments, you might experience fatigue, lowering of blood pressure, and a feeling of discomfort.

Less common side effects
These include:

- Lightheadedness
- Chest pain/tightness
- Difficulty breathing

If any of these side effects occur, the nurse will stop the infusion and notify the doctor. Most symptoms get better after reducing or stopping the infusion.

Rare but serious side effects
While IVIG is generally safe, there are rare but serious possible side effects. In some patients who have a low IgA level (tested by a blood test), some forms of IVIG can cause an allergic reaction that can be severe (rash, shortness of breath, drop in blood pressure, shock). Using a form of IVIG that has IgA taken out may reduce this risk.

Since IVIG is a blood product, it has the same risk as other blood products of transmitting disease. All blood products are carefully checked for known infections prior to their use in patients.

There are rare cases of IVIG causing blood clotting. Such blood clotting can cause a variety of problems including swelling in the legs, shortness of breath, stroke, heart attack, and, rarely, death.

There are also occasional case reports of 'aseptic meningitis', an inflammation of the lining around the brain due to the medication associated with headache, neck stiffness, and fever. This is self-limiting. Rarely IVIG can cause skin rashes and other less common side effects.

If any side effects occur or you suspect you are having side effects of this medication, have the nurse stop the infusion and call the doctor. If you are home after the infusion and experience side effects, call your healthcare provider. If symptoms are severe, call an ambulance.