

Can Immunoglobulin products cause adverse effects?

Side effects from these blood products

Up to 15% of people receiving intravenous immunoglobulin products may develop a mild or moderate headache and a mild loss of appetite for about 24 hours. If this occurs, a change of infusion rate or a change of product may be used to avoid or minimise the symptoms.

Localised redness and swelling may occur with subcutaneous immunoglobulin.

Uncommon or rare side effects that may occur from these immunoglobulin products:

- Vomiting, flushing, chills, abdominal pain, or pain and aches in muscles or joints.
- An allergy to one of the proteins present. It will be necessary to stop the treatment if this occurs.
- A severe headache for several days.
- Chest pain may occur after intravenous immunoglobulin products, but is very uncommon.
- Rarely, patients may experience a fall in blood pressure, breathing difficulty or a skin rash with IVIg.
- IVIg may contain antibodies which could damage the red cells (i.e. cause haemolysis) in some patients.

This leaflet provides information about

- Intragam[®]P
- Privigen[®]
- Evogam[®]

to support informed consent before receiving treatment with one of these products.

If you need more information, please ask your Doctor.

Do Immunoglobulin products ever fail to give the expected benefits?

- These products provide important treatments for people who are unable to make sufficient antibodies themselves. However, they will not provide complete protection from infections. If an infection occurs, it may still be necessary to obtain other medical treatment to help deal with the problem.
- The products are also used to treat some autoimmune and inflammatory conditions. They will suppress many of these conditions, either partially or completely for a few weeks.
- In some people, these conditions may settle down completely after the treatment, in others the symptoms may return. It may be necessary to have repeated treatments every few weeks to maintain the desired effect.
- If your treatment does not provide sufficient improvement on its own, the treatment may be stopped or it may be combined with other treatments to produce better long-term benefit.

Your doctor will discuss these issues with you, if they arise.

The support organisation for people in New Zealand with immune deficiencies is:

Immune Deficiencies Foundation of New Zealand (IDFNZ)

Phone Toll-Free 0508 300 600

or Fax 09 523 5551

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Immunoglobulin Products

- Intragam[®]P
- Privigen[®]
- Evogam[®]



Your guide
to blood
transfusion

You have been given this leaflet because your Doctor considers you may need treatment with one of these Immunoglobulin products:

- **Intragam®P**
- **Privigen®** or
- **Evogam®**

As with any treatment you have the right to decide whether you want to have the treatment or not. You will be asked to sign a Consent Form to show that:

- the benefits, risks and alternatives for your treatment, including transfusion of blood products, have been explained to you,
- you have been able to ask any questions about the treatment, and
- you agree to receive the treatment.

This leaflet provides answers to common questions about these blood products.

What are these Immunoglobulin products?

- They are concentrated solutions of antibodies.
- Antibodies are natural proteins present in blood that are made by the immune system of the body. They are needed to stop some infections.
- Intragam®P and Evogam® are made from blood donations given by voluntary blood donors in New Zealand. It is manufactured for the New Zealand Blood Service by CSL Behring, Melbourne, Australia.
- Privigen® is made from blood donations given by blood donors in Europe and North America. They are manufactured by CSL Behring in Europe and North America and supplied to New Zealand Blood Service.

- During manufacture of these products the antibodies in blood donations are extracted by a carefully controlled process.
- All of the products undergo special treatment to prevent viral infections from being transmitted.

How is treatment given?

- **Intragam®P and Privigen®** are injected as a steady infusion into a vein.
- **Evogam®** is injected as a steady infusion under the skin into subcutaneous tissue.
- The amount given and the time needed for each infusion depend on the condition treated. Infusion of an intravenous dose will usually take several hours.

It is usual to monitor patients receiving treatment in a hospital or clinic. Some people, who need regular doses of Evogam® and sometimes Privigen® or Intragam®P, may receive their treatment at home if this can be done safely.

Conditions treated with these Immunoglobulin products

- These products provide important treatment for people who have **low levels of antibodies**.
 - Low levels of antibodies may be caused by inherited (genetic) conditions.
 - Low levels of antibodies may also be caused by acquired conditions such as some infections and by cancers of the white blood cells and bone marrow.
- The treatment is given to prevent some infections that cannot be avoided when applying alternative therapy.
- **Some autoimmune disorders** in which a person's immune system reacts against their own tissues will benefit from treatment with these products. These conditions may affect blood cells, nerves, or other parts of the body.

- These products are also helpful in a small number of conditions where **inflammation, infection or antibodies** cause serious damage to tissues.

The choice of which of these products is appropriate for you will be decided by your doctor in association with Blood Service Specialists and international treatment guidelines.

Safety of Immunoglobulin Products

Do remember that

- Infections such as HIV / AIDS, Hepatitis B or Hepatitis C have never been spread by any of these blood products.
- There is no evidence that these blood products have ever passed on any other infections.
- Because these blood products are prepared from blood donations they could possibly pass on some infections. However blood donors in New Zealand, Europe and North America are always checked for health and lifestyle before donating blood. Blood donations are only collected if the donor is in good health and meets all routine screening criteria.
- Every blood donation is tested for the infections: HIV / AIDS, Hepatitis B and C and Syphilis. Blood donations are only used if the tests show no evidence that these infections are present.
- The manufacturing processes for making Intragam®P, Privigen® or Evogam® are able to destroy these and many other viruses.
- There is no evidence that Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease (CJD), or variant CJD, has ever been passed on by immunoglobulin products made from human blood donations.

Intragam®P, Privigen® or Evogam® are often combined with other treatments to obtain the best results for each person.