

Subcutaneous immunoglobulin

An introduction for patients

What is subcutaneous immunoglobulin (SCIg)?

SCIg is an immunoglobulin similar to intravenous immunoglobulin (IVIg). It is made from plasma (the liquid part of blood containing important proteins like antibodies). Immunoglobulins (commonly known as antibodies) are used to treat people who are unable to make enough of their own, or their antibodies do not work properly. Immunoglobulin therapy in Australia has mostly been IVIg (through a drip into the vein). Immunoglobulin is now available as SCIg (an infusion into the fatty tissue under the skin) which may offer benefits for some patients.

Why would I consider SCIg?

SCIg is well tolerated and safe. The choice of IVIg or SCIg will depend on several factors and should be discussed with your treating doctor. The table below summarises the differences for you.

SCIg	IVIg
 You can have it at home.	 Therapy is usually in a hospital.
 You give yourself the infusion into the fatty tissue under the skin.	 An intravenous infusion given by a health care professional.
Must meet the SCIg criteria. Can be used in patients who have frequent reactions to IVIg.	Must meet IVIg criteria.
 Can be given at a time that fits into your routine, more flexibility and independence. Fewer hospital visits, less expensive. You must comply with the treatment plan.	 You are required to attend hospital every month or as required by your doctor. Arranged by the hospital when times are available.
 Must learn to put in a small needle, draw up the SCIg, use the pump, and document the event.	Report any reactions to the nurse.
Approximately 1 hour per infusion. 1–2 per week, as set by your doctor.	 2–5 hours per infusion. 1 per month (4 weeks) or as required by your doctor.
 More consistent immunoglobulin levels. No 'wear off' effect. Local side effects: site swelling, redness and itching at injection site – these can last 1–2 days.	Rapid rise in immunoglobulin levels can cause side effects that last for a few days after the infusion. Immunoglobulin levels taper off before the next therapy. You may feel a 'wear off' effect, starting up to a week before your next treatment, when the immunoglobulin levels become low again.
 Can take SCIg when travelling.	 Can sometimes be difficult to arrange treatment when you travel.

Where do I find more information?

SCIg has been approved in Australia for specific conditions; ask your doctor if you meet the criteria.

If you want more information about SCIg or self-administration, contact your doctor, Hospital SCIg Coordinator or Transfusion Nurse.

Reference: ASCIA - [ASCIA PID Clinical Update \(allergy.org.au\)](https://allergy.org.au)

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