

Subcutaneous immunoglobulin












An introduction for patients

What is subcutaneous immunoglobulin (SCIg)?

SCIg is immunoglobulin made from plasma (the liquid part of blood containing important proteins like antibodies) that is administered subcutaneously. 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. In Australia immunoglobulin therapy has mostly been intravenous, given via a drip into the vein, but it's also available as SCIg (an infusion into the fatty tissue under the skin) which may be more convenient and beneficial for patients.

Why would I consider SCIg?

SCIg is well tolerated and safe. The choice of intravenous immunoglobulin (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 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, offering more flexibility and independence. Fewer hospital visits, less expense.	 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 insert small needles, draw up the SCIg, use the pump, and document the event. Report any reactions to SCIg coordinator or treating hospital	Report any reactions to the nurse.
Approximately 1 hour per infusion. Usually 1 per week, or 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. 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 Position Statement - Immunoglobulin Replacement Therapy in PID - Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy \(ASCIA\)](https://www.allergy.org.au/hp/papers/ascia-immunoglobulin-replacement-therapy-in-pid) <<https://www.allergy.org.au/hp/papers/ascia-immunoglobulin-replacement-therapy-in-pid>>

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