

Subcutaneous immunoglobulin

An introduction for patients












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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 [(set routine?) This may be arranged by the hospital at inconvenient times] 
 Must learn to put in a small needle, draw up the product, use the pump, document event	Report any reactions to the nurse
Approximately 1 hour per infusion 1–2 per week	 2–5 hours per infusion 1 per month (4 weeks) or as required by your doctor
 More even immunoglobulin levels; may mean fewer infections 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 your next therapy, when you maybe more likely to get an infection 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 be difficult sometimes (unworkable) 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 - Subcutaneous immunoglobulin (SCIg) therapy [ASCIA PID Clinical Update \(allergy.org.au\)](https://www.allergy.org.au/clinical-guidance/ascia-pid-clinical-update)