

Immune Globulin (IG)

Immunization protects you from disease. Get protected, get immunized.

- **Immune Globulins are needed for fast but short term protection.**
- **For long term protection, get immunized.**

What is Immune Globulin (IG)?

IG is made from blood and contains antibodies.

IG gives fast protection against measles or hepatitis A, but it is not long lasting. For long lasting protection, immunization with a measles or hepatitis A containing vaccine is needed.

Who should have IG?

IG is given after contact with the **measles** virus to unprotected people who are at risk for serious illness (e.g., weak immune system, pregnant woman, baby under 1 year of age).

IG is given after contact with the **hepatitis A** virus to unprotected people who are at risk for serious illness (e.g., liver disease, weak immune system, baby under 6 months of age).

IG must be given within a certain time after contact with the virus.

How many doses of IG are needed?

People need 1 dose of IG as soon as possible after contact with the virus. The size of the dose depends on the person's body weight.

How well does IG work?

For people who have been in contact with hepatitis A or measles virus, IG helps prevent the disease or helps prevent serious illness in those who do get disease.

Is IG safe?

IG is one of the safest blood products available. Canadian Blood Services carefully screens donors and tests all blood collected. The blood of donors is not used if the donor has known risk factors or tests positive for an infectious diseases. IG is treated with heat and chemicals to kill germs that might be present. The risk of getting an infection from IG is very small.

Where can I get IG?

If you think you have been in contact with hepatitis A or measles, call Health Link.

If IG is needed, it will be given at your local public health office.

Are there side effects from IG?

There can be side effects from IG, but they tend to be mild and go away in a few days. Side effects may include:

- redness, feeling sore, or muscle stiffness where you had the needle
- feeling tired or unwell
- fever

Hives and general swelling may occur.

It is important to stay for 15 minutes after you have IG. Some people may have a rare but serious allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. If anaphylaxis happens, you will get medicine to treat the symptoms.

It is rare to have a serious side effect. Call Health Link at 811 to report any serious or unusual side effects.

How can I manage side effects?

- To help with soreness and swelling, put a cool, wet cloth over the area where you had the needle.
- There is medicine to help with fever or pain. Check with your doctor or pharmacist if you are not sure what medicine or dosage to take. Follow the directions on the package.
- Children under the age of 18 years should **not** take aspirin because it can cause serious health problems.
- Some people with health problems, such as a weak immune system, must call their doctor if they get a fever. If you have been told to do this, call your doctor even if you think the fever is from the vaccine.

Who should not have IG?

Talk to your healthcare provider before having IG if you:

- have an allergy to parts of the immune globulin
- had a severe or unusual reaction after this immune globulin or one like it
- have an IgA deficiency

Check with your doctor or public health nurse before you get IG.

You can still have IG if you have a mild illness such as a cold or fever. Always tell your healthcare provider if you have allergies or if you have had a side effect from an immune globulin in the past.

IG can interfere with live vaccines, including the vaccine to prevent measles. The time you need to wait before having a live vaccine depends on the dose of IG you had. Before getting a live vaccine tell your health care provider if you had IG in the past 12 months.

If you had a live vaccine less than 14 days before having IG, ask a public health nurse if the live vaccine needs to be repeated.

For More Information



Call Health Link at 811



Go to [ImmunizeAlberta.ca](https://www.immunizealberta.ca)



Go to [MyHealth.Alberta.ca](https://www.myhealth.alberta.ca)

Facts about measles and hepatitis A

What is measles?

Measles is a virus that spreads easily through the air when someone who has measles coughs or sneezes. It can cause:

- a high fever
- cough
- runny nose
- red eyes
- a blotchy, red rash

Measles can be dangerous because:

- One in 10 people with measles will get middle ear or lung infections.
- One in 1000 people with measles will get encephalitis (infection of the brain), which can lead to seizures, deafness, or brain damage.
- One to 2 of every 1,000 people with measles could die.

What is hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is an infection in the liver that is caused by the hepatitis A virus. Symptoms include poor appetite, nausea, feeling tired, fever, and yellow skin and eyes (jaundice). The symptoms can be serious and last for months.

One out of 4 adults need to be admitted to a hospital and in rare cases, infection can cause death.

You are at high risk for serious illness from hepatitis A if you:

- have other liver problems
- have a weak immune system
- are over the age of 60 years

Hepatitis A spreads through infected stool by getting onto hands or into food and water, and then into the mouth.