



Immune Globulin (IG)

What You Need to Know

Deployment Medication Information Sheets (DMIS) are provided by the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine (USACHPPM). Written for soldiers and their families, they provide basic information on deployment medications that are intended as guidance only; consult your health care provider for more information.

What is Immune Globulin?

The immune globulin (IG) is not an immunization, but is a preparation of pooled human antibodies (immunoglobulins) that is used to provide temporary protection against hepatitis A.

What is hepatitis A?

Hepatitis A is a serious liver disease caused by the hepatitis A virus. Hepatitis A can cause a mild flu-like illness, jaundice (yellow skin or eyes), and/or severe stomach pains or diarrhea. People with hepatitis A infection often have to be hospitalized.

How do you get hepatitis A?

- You usually get hepatitis A from drinking water or eating food contaminated by the feces of an infected person. It can easily be passed from one person to another in the same living quarters.
- It is often spread in poor sanitary conditions, in areas of poor hygiene, or after floods or natural disasters.
- You may also get hepatitis A from sexual contact
- It is rarely obtained through blood exposures or transfusions.

Who should get IG and how is it given?



The IG is currently only used for those who cannot take the hepatitis A vaccine.

- It is given to persons traveling to high-risk areas for hepatitis A and other infectious diseases.
- IG can be given before exposure for short-term protection against hepatitis A.
- It can also be given to persons who have already been exposed to the hepatitis A virus, but must be given within 2 weeks after exposure to for maximum protection.

Your health care provider will give you IG. Because IG provides protection for a limited period of time (1 to 3 months), additional doses may be necessary based on the situation and dose administered.

What does the military require?

No current military requirement exists for use of immune globulin. The military currently requires the hepatitis A vaccine to prevent hepatitis A infections.

Are there any side effects?

- You may have redness, warmth, tenderness, or pain at the site of the injection for a few days.
- You may also experience fever, chills, headache, weakness and nausea. If these effects continue or become bothersome, inform your health care provider.
- Notify your health care provider if you experience skin rash; swelling of the hands, feet or face; or trouble breathing.
- It is very unlikely, but contact your health care provider if vision problems, confusion, or seizures occur.

Is there any reason I shouldn't get this medication?

- Tell your health care provider if you have any pre-existing illnesses, blood disorders, or allergies, including any drug allergies.
- If you have thrombocytopenia, IgA deficiency or hypersensitivity to thimerosal, you should not take this medication.
- Tell your health care provider if you're taking any over-the-counter or prescription medication. Do not administer within 3 months of a live virus vaccine.

What if I'm pregnant or breast-feeding?

- IG should be given during pregnancy only when clearly needed. Talk to your health care provider about the risks and benefits.
- It is not known if IG appears in breast milk. Consult your health care provider before breast-feeding.

You can avoid getting hepatitis A!

- Get properly immunized with the hepatitis A vaccine as scheduled.
- Practice good hand washing and proper personal hygiene.
- Properly prepare and store foods.
- Use only Veterinary or Preventive Medicine-approved foods, beverages, or water.

Be sure the vaccination is recorded in your medical record.

Where can I get more information?

- Health care provider at your military treatment facility.
- Military Immunizations web page: <http://www.tricare.osd.mil/immunization/vaccines.html>
- CDC Specific Disease web site: www.cdc.gov/health/diseases.htm
- CDC Vaccine Information web site: www.cdc.gov/nip/publications/VIS/default.htm

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