

Immune Globulin (Human)

Vaccines and immune globulins have saved more lives in Canada in the last 60 years than any other medical intervention. They help your immune system to recognize and fight bacteria and viruses that cause diseases.

What is immune globulin?

Immune globulin has large amounts of antibodies taken from the plasma in donated human blood. Antibodies are proteins that a person's immune system makes to fight viruses or bacteria.

Immune globulin provides immediate, short-term protection against hepatitis A and measles in susceptible individuals. It can prevent infection or make the disease less severe.

Immune globulin **works best** when it is given as soon as possible after disease exposure. Hepatitis A and measles diseases each have specific time frames in which immune globulin must be given to be effective in preventing or lessening the severity of disease.

Who should get immune globulin?

If you or your child has been exposed to hepatitis A or measles, you may be advised to get immune globulin. Contact your doctor, nurse practitioner or public health nurse for information.

Who should not get immune globulin?

- People who had a life-threatening reaction to a previous dose of an immune globulin product, or any components of the product.
- Those who have a condition called isolated immunoglobulin A deficiency.
- **Note: Immune globulin can interfere with some vaccines.** Speak with a public health nurse, nurse practitioner or physician if you have been vaccinated for measles, mumps, rubella, chickenpox, shingles or other live vaccine within the past 14 days or if you receive these vaccines in the future.

Is immune globulin safe?

Yes, immune globulin is a very safe human blood product. Canadian Blood Services screens and tests every blood donation. Since blood screening and testing began, there have been no reports of blood-borne infections like HIV or hepatitis B in persons receiving immune globulin.

What are common reactions to immune globulin?

- Pain, swelling, tenderness and hives at the injection site.
- Tiredness, fever, headache, nausea.
- Rarely, blood clots may occur after the administration of an immune globulin product.
- Only treat a fever (at least 6 to 8 hours after immunization) if your child is uncomfortable, refusing fluids and not sleeping.

Acetaminophen (Tylenol, Tempra) may be given for fever or soreness. ASA (Aspirin) must NOT be given to anyone younger than 18 years old because of the risk of Reye syndrome.

It is important to stay in the clinic for 15 minutes after getting an immune globulin because there is an extremely rare possibility of a life-threatening allergic reaction called anaphylaxis. This may include hives, difficulty breathing, or swelling of the throat, tongue or lips. **If this happens after you leave the clinic, call 911 or the local emergency number.** This reaction can be treated, and occurs in less than one in one million people who get an immune globulin.

Who should you report reactions to?

- Report any adverse or unexpected reactions to your local public health nurse, your doctor, or nurse practitioner as soon as possible.

Talk to a public health nurse:

- If you have questions or concerns about you or your child's reaction to an immunization.
- If you or your child had to go to a doctor, a hospital or to a health centre with a symptom that might be related to immunization.

What does this product contain?

GamaSTAN® contains 15-18% immune globulin (human) as an active ingredient and glycine. It does not contain any preservatives including thimerosal.

Mature Minor Consent

It is recommended that parents/guardians discuss consent for treatment with their children. Efforts are first made to get parental/guardian consent for treatment. However, children at least 13 years of age up to and including 17 years of age, who are able to understand the benefits and possible reactions for each product and the risks of not getting treatment, can legally consent to or refuse treatment in Saskatchewan by providing mature minor informed consent to a healthcare provider.

Provincial immunization fact sheets are available at www.saskatchewan.ca/immunize.

For more information, contact your local public health office, your physician, nurse practitioner, HealthLine online or by calling 811.

Reference: GamaSTAN® product monograph (2019).