

Leslie » The levels you report are considered low. While you may be asymptomatic, many immunologists would consider starting IG therapy to ensure you have adequate levels to protect you against developing infections. The next step would be to test how your immune system functions in response to the pneumovax and diphtheria/tetanus vaccines. I would recommend following up with your immunologist to ask if additional tests are necessary to determine if starting IG therapy is appropriate. If you aren't currently being seen by an immunologist, you may consider seeking an opinion from one who is familiar with treating immune deficiencies. You can search for an immunologist close to your location on the American Academy of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology website (www.AAAAI.org).

Question » Should I Be Started on Immune Globulin (IG) Therapy Based on My Immunoglobulin Quantitative Levels?

I have seen two doctors who disagree about whether I should begin IG treatment. My IgG quantitative value is 282 and has been retested a few times and remains low. My IgA quantitative value is also low at 11, but my IgM quantitative value is 86. I do not have many symptoms, but I am concerned I will acquire some catastrophic disease.

Question » Can Anything Be Done to Stop Pleuritic Pain Caused by Subcutaneous Immune Globulin (SCIG) Therapy?

I started Hizentra SCIG therapy in 2014. After 10 months to 12 months of infusions, I began having pleuritic pain in my chest and left shoulder, and I have pain when I breathe. I also developed a severe rash. My immunologist prescribed prednisone to suppress the pain. After numerous tests (two CT scans of my chest, a bronchoscopy and blood work) came back normal, my doctor stopped my infusions for about a year. Not long after stopping the infusions, my pleuritic pain went away. My doctor then started me on HyQvia SCIG infusions, and the pleuritic pain returned, so we know the infusions are causing the pain. I was prescribed prednisone for about two years, but my doctor and I agreed it was time to stop it and try ibuprofen. My immunologist has heard of SCIG infusions causing pleuritic pain, but I'm the first patient to have this issue. Is there anything my doctor and I can do (short of stopping the infusions completely) to prevent the pain? Continuing to take prednisone or ibuprofen is not a good situation.

Abbie » I spoke with one of our experts, and he said the side effects you describe are atypical for IG infusions, but may be a delayed type of inflammatory reaction. The first thing to try would be to change the product, which you have already done. A second suggestion is to break up the SCIG infusions into smaller, more frequent doses — maybe three times per week, or possibly even small daily doses with a different 20% product (Cuvitru) or possibly one of the 10% products approved for subcutaneous administration. Those products are Gammaked, Gamunex-C or Gammagard Liquid. It should be noted that Gammagard Liquid is the same IG product found in HyQvia. Dosing more frequently would keep a very stable level of IgG and may prevent the side effects.

» *Have a question?* Email us at editor@IGLiving.com. Your information will remain confidential unless permission is given.

.....
LESLIE J. VAUGHAN, RPh, is senior vice president of clinical programs at NuFACTOR Specialty Pharmacy.

.....
ABBIE CORNETT is the patient advocate for *IG Living* magazine.