

**Dr. Harville** » When IVIG was introduced, its intended treatment was to replace the low IgG levels in patients with immune deficiencies. After treatment begins, patients' IgG levels are checked periodically to ensure they are receiving an adequate dose of IVIG.

It was quickly identified that IVIG is also beneficial for some other immune-mediated conditions such as dermatomyositis. The dose for these conditions is much higher than for an immune deficiency, so it would

be expected that patients would have a higher-than-normal level of IgG once therapy started. Increased levels of IgG aren't harmful for dermatomyositis; however, there are risks associated with receiving IVIG infusions such as increased risk of developing blood clots or kidney failure. These rare adverse reactions typically would occur within 24 to 48 hours of the infusion.

**Question** » Is There a Problem if IgG Levels Are Above the Normal Range After Treatment with IVIG?

*I have been diagnosed with Sjögren's syndrome and dermatomyositis, and have been treated with 40 grams of intravenous immune globulin (IVIG, Privigen) every two weeks for about seven months. My IgG blood test levels are now 1,747, which exceeds the maximum amount of the normal range (600-1,714 mg/dl). Should I be concerned about this?*

**Question** » Is There a Preservative-Free IG Brand?

*I am allergic to thimerosal, so I am looking for a preservative-free brand of immune globulin (IG), preferably subcutaneous IG.*

**Leslie** » No IG products contain thimerosal, so any product is fine.

**Dr. Riedl** » It is unlikely IG is causing the proteinuria unless there is some other underlying kidney disorder. The normal kidney does not typically spill protein, and unless IgG levels are much higher than the normal range due to the infusions, there should be no reason for this to occur simply due to IG treatment. The vast majority of kidney issues associated with IG involve increases in the BUN and creatinine. I would recommend you have a kidney specialist involved with your treatment to ensure there is no other underlying medical cause for the proteinuria. ■

**Question** » What Is the Cause of Increasing Proteinuria with SCIG Therapy?

*Since I have been on subcutaneous immune globulin (SCIG) therapy, I have had increasing proteinuria (protein in the urine) but no abnormality in kidney function, and no one seems concerned. I have normal creatinine and blood urea nitrogen (BUN) levels. Is the proteinuria caused by the IG protein spilling over into the urine?*

» **Have a question?** Email us at [editor@IGLiving.com](mailto:editor@IGLiving.com). Your information will remain confidential unless permission is given.

**TERRY O. HARVILLE, MD, PhD**, is medical director of the Special Immunology Laboratory at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences and a consultant for immunodeficiencies, autoimmunities and transplantation.

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

**MARC RIEDL, MD, MS**, is associate professor of medicine in the division of rheumatology, allergy and immunology at the University of California, San Diego.