Abbie » I spoke with a couple of our experts regarding your question. They said they have treated patients with multiple myeloma and high IgA who do well with IG treatment, and there should be no major issues with IG therapy, especially if it is infused subcutaneously (SCIG). With SCIG, the most commonly reported side effects are injection-site reactions, swelling, redness and/or irritation that occur at the needle insertion site and are typically localized. These reactions usually resolve within 24 hours to 48 hours after the infusion is completed. They are more common in the first several infusions, and their incidence normally decreases over time.

Question » Will immune globulin replacement therapy cause severe side effects in patients with polyclonal IgA hypergammaglobulinemia?

I have been diagnosed with specific antibody deficiency, IgM deficiency and polyclonal IgA hypergammaglobulinemia. Despite taking prophylactic antibiotics for the last few years, I continue to be ill. I have been prescribed antibiotics, antivirals or antifungals 64 times in the last three years. My current immunologist and I have discussed immune globulin (IG) replacement therapy, but she is worried that because of my polyclonal IgA hypergammaglobulinemia, I would suffer unacceptable side effects. My IgA levels are in the high 300s to middle 400s. My IgG level is below normal but not overly so. Are the possible side effects to IG therapy extreme, and can they be managed?

Abbie » I spoke with Michelle Greer, RN, senior vice president of Nufactor, a Specialty Infusion Company, and she said the short answer is yes. Gammagard is dosed by the patient’s body weight. The typical dosing is 2 grams per kilogram. However, some physicians may prescribe a little less or a total gram amount, but dosing would still be close to 2 grams per kilogram. Total grams are then divided over a few days, depending on the size of the dose, which is better for tolerability. For example, if the patient weighs 75 kilograms, the total dose of Gammagard would be 150 grams. That patient could then be infused with 50 grams per day for three days, or if the patient is more prone to reactions, he or she could be infused with 30 grams per day for five days.

Question » How is the dose of Gammagard (intravenous immune globulin) calculated for myasthenia gravis patients?

I am a patient with generalized myasthenia gravis, and I would like to know how the dosage for Gammagard is calculated. Is it by body weight?

Abbie » I spoke with Michelle Greer, RN, senior vice president of Nufactor, a Specialty Infusion Company, and she said the short answer is yes. Gammagard is dosed by the patient’s body weight. The typical dosing is 2 grams per kilogram. However, some physicians may prescribe a little less or a total gram amount, but dosing would still be close to 2 grams per kilogram. Total grams are then divided over a few days, depending on the size of the dose, which is better for tolerability. For example, if the patient weighs 75 kilograms, the total dose of Gammagard would be 150 grams. That patient could then be infused with 50 grams per day for three days, or if the patient is more prone to reactions, he or she could be infused with 30 grams per day for five days.

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

ABBIE CORNETT is the patient advocate for IG Living magazine.