

# Infusion Medications

You and your provider have chosen to treat your symptoms with an infused medication. The following information is intended to answer some questions you may have and better prepare you for your future treatment. If you have any further questions after reviewing this information please contact our office.

## What is an infusion?

Infusion medications are medications administered intravenously (IV) to treat your health condition. They are typically administered in an infusion center that is staffed with nurses, pharmacists and a health care provider to oversee the administration of the medication.

The first step to this process is receiving “approval” from your insurance company. This involves your provider sending a prescription along with your most recent office visit note that justifies the need for the medication to better control your symptoms. Depending on your insurance company this can take one to two weeks. After the approval or denial is received you will be contacted by one of our staff and given further instructions. If the medication is approved you will be instructed how to schedule your infusion at an infusion center (a place where infused medication is administered under medical supervision).

Before receiving your infusion a few tests need to be completed. This is necessary because the infused medication that you will be receiving can lower your ability to fight infections. You will be tested for Tuberculosis (TB) and Hepatitis B. You should talk to your provider about your complete medical history including; TB or any possible exposure, serious infections, cancer, heart failure, Hepatitis, liver injury, blood problems or nervous system disorders such as seizures or multiple sclerosis.

## Preparing for your infusion:

- 1) Drink plenty of water and make sure that you are hydrated. If you are on fluid restrictions because of a heart or kidney condition please check with your healthcare for instructions on how to ensure you are well hydrated before your infusion
- 2) Wear comfortable loose fitting clothing. Consider wearing layers that allow for temperature control. Some infusions can make you feel hot or cold. The infusion center will have blankets and pillows.
- 3) Do not wear any fragrances or perfume as other patients in the infusion center could be allergic or have sensitivities to fragrances.
- 4) Bring a complete list of your current medications.
- 5) Bring entertainment. You can bring books, magazines, tablets (please bring headphones if you are going to listen to music or watch a movie so as you do not disturb other patients in the infusion center).
- 6) You may bring drinks or snacks. A box lunch will be provided to patients however you are welcome to bring your own lunch. We do provide a microwave; we ask that you not

bring foods that produce a strong odor which may be offensive to other patients. Tea, coffee, juice and water are provided.

## What happens during and after the infusion?

- 1) You will need to have blood work regularly while receiving infusion medications. The medication that you are taking will determine the frequency of lab work necessary. Often times you will need to have labs done the morning of your infusion or sometimes you may have them completed the day before.
- 2) Before your infusion begins you will have your vital signs taken along with your weight. Many infused drugs are dosed based on weight so it is important that you are weighed at these appointments and your office visits.
- 3) Next, your healthcare professional will sterilize your arm or hand with rubbing alcohol prior to insertion of the IV needle and catheter. Once the IV is in place, it will be secured with tape.
- 4) Then the IV tubing will be connected to a saline solution that will first be infused into your blood stream and then the IV bag containing your infusion medication will be infused. You will be monitored closely (about 15-30 minute intervals) While you are receiving your infusion. This process can take several hours.
- 5) Before you receive your infusion you may be given medication to prevent or lessen the chances of an infusion reaction. These medications can include histamine blockers, steroids, acetaminophen and nausea medications.
- 6) Ask questions and notify the staff if you are not feeling "right" or have a concern.
- 7) After your infusion is completed your IV catheter will be removed and a dressing will be placed. You should keep this in place for 30 minutes. If you are on blood thinners you may need to keep the dressing in place longer. Check with the staff at the infusion center in regard to the length of necessary time to keep the dressing in place.
- 8) Make sure you have contact information for your rheumatologist office in the event you have a questions or concern about your infusion or any post infusion symptoms.

It is important to keep your infusion appointments as well as your office visits. This will ensure that you do not miss any treatments and that the approval process through your insurance company stays current.

Should you have any questions regarding this information please contact our office.

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