

WHAT IS INFUSION THERAPY?

When a chronic autoimmune condition is so severe that it cannot be effectively treated by oral medications, your doctor may prescribe infusion therapy. We provide infusion therapy to treat patients with autoimmune disorders, such as Crohn's disease, ulcerative colitis, and inflammatory bowel disease (IBD). The medication is mixed in solution and then administered through a small intravenous catheter placed in a vein in your arm, or other specified site.

HOW OFTEN WILL I RECEIVE INFUSION?

For the medications Remicade®, Inflectra®, Avsola®, Renflexis®, and Entyvio®, the induction dose is administered at 0, 2 and 6 weeks, then every 8 weeks thereafter. Most patients will receive approximately six infusions per year after the induction. For the medications, Skyrizi®, Omvoh®, and Tremfya®, the induction dose is administered at 0, 4, and 8 weeks, then at home maintenance injections every 8 weeks thereafter.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE?

Depending on the medication and dosage, patients typically spend between one to two and a half hours in our facility for their therapy – from check-in to check-out. During infusion, the solution is infused over the course of 30 minutes to two hours. Occasionally, to reduce the likelihood of an infusion reaction, the medication is infused more slowly.

Due to the risk of reaction, some patients require pre-medication which may include a steroid, antihistamine, and Tylenol. If needed, the nurse will start the IV and give the pre-medication then wait about 20 minutes before starting infusion.

WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A REACTION?

Alert the nurse if you feel the onset of **any** symptoms during infusion because it could be the first sign of a reaction. The infusion may be slowed or stopped and additional medications or measures may be implemented if there is a reaction. Symptoms could include rash, itching, swelling, feeling hot, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, wheezing, dizziness, or heart palpitations.

Although rare, a delayed reaction may occur up to 10-14 days after an infusion. Go to the emergency room if you have shortness of breath, trouble breathing, or a burning, scratchy feeling in your throat. If you have a rash, itching, or other symptoms, contact your ordering physician who referred you for infusion.

WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT AFTER INFUSION?

Because medications suppress the immune system, you could be more susceptible to illness immediately and in the weeks following the infusion. If you have flu-like symptoms, a cold or fever before coming in for infusion, please contact your ordering physician to see if you should have the infusion. Alert the infusion nurse if you recently experienced these symptoms.

IS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AVAILABLE?

There are two separate costs for infusion – a fee for the medication and a fee for the administration of the medication.

- **Patients with insurance** – Your deductible or coinsurance may be applied to the cost of the medication and/or the administration of the medication. You are responsible for any remaining amount out-of-pocket. There is a copay rebate program to assist patients with the balance due for the cost of the medication. This rebate does not apply to the administration costs. Most copay assistance programs do not assist with the administration costs for infusion. (There are 2 manufacturer exceptions). Please connect with our Infusion Coordinator Team at 404-257-9000 ext 2108 for enrollment information. Enrollment for Copay Assistance should be completed prior to the first infusion appointment.
- **Patients without insurance or with government insurance** – For those who meet eligibility requirements, you can apply for a patient assistance program which may supply medication for those who qualify. Enrollment for Patient assistance programs should be done with our Infusion coordinator Team prior to the first infusion appointment. Call 404-257-9000 ext 2108 for information. You are responsible for the cost to administer the medication out-of-pocket. We offer discounted rates for self-pay patients. Please refer to the Self-Pay Rates form.

HOW OFTEN DO I NEED TO SEE MY ORDERING PHYSICIAN?

All infusion patients are required to see their physician at least annually. Some medications also require annual lab work.

WHO DO I CONTACT FOR SCHEDULING AND BILLING?

To schedule or reschedule an appointment, do not call the office. Please contact the Infusion Coordinator department at 404-257-9000 ext 2108, Monday through Friday 8am - 4pm, or email infusionscheduling@uniteddigestive.com

For billing questions, please contact 404-236-2350