

Antithymocyte Globulin (ATG)

Antithymocyte Globulin, also known by the brand name Thymoglobulin or Atgam, is a medicine that is used for a number of reasons including:

- Treatment of Aplastic Anemia (AA). This autoimmune disorder is when the body does not make enough new blood cells.
- Treatment and prevention of Graft Versus Host Disease (GVHD). This happens when tissue, stem cells or bone marrow from a donor attacks the recipient's cells.
- Treatment and prevention of solid organ transplant rejection.

ATG blocks the effects of white blood cells that may cause your disease or the rejection of your transplanted organ.

ATG is given intravenously (IV) through a tube put in your upper chest or neck. It takes several hours to give each dose of ATG. You may need to get a small amount of the medicine as a test dose, before you get the daily dose. The test dose lets your health care team watch for any side effects that may happen. Your doctor or nurse will tell you if you need a test dose.

About This Medicine

- This medicine is given in the hospital.
- Laboratory tests must be done every day while you are getting ATG. This is done to check for any side effects from the drug.
- ATG is given through a machine called an IV pump. The pump has an alarm that may beep. If the pump alarm goes off, call your nurse. Do not touch the pump.
- You may be given acetaminophen (Tylenol), antihistamine medicine (Benadryl) and a corticosteroid before the dose of ATG begins, and again after it has started. These medicines help control the side effects of ATG.

This handout is for informational purposes only. Talk with your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.

- Your nurses will check your temperature, pulse, breathing, and blood pressure often while you are getting this medicine.

Are there any precautions that need to be taken?

- This medicine can irritate the vein. If the IV in your upper chest or neck hurts, tell your nurse.
- This medicine can weaken your immune system for up to several months after your last dose. Your immune system helps fight infections. Avoid contact with people who have colds or other infections. If a friend or family member has a cold or flu, tell them not to visit you until they are better.
- If you are being treated for Aplastic Anemia, it may take up to six months before a complete response is seen. Your immune system will be weaker during this time. Avoid visits from people who may be sick or anyone who has been around someone who has been sick.
- Safe handling of this medicine is needed. Members of your health care team will wear gloves. Gloves will also be worn to handle your body fluids, such as urine, stool, blood and vomit. Ask your nurse for more information about how to safely handle this medicine.

Side Effects

Tell your doctor and nurse if you have any of the following:

- Fever of 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit (38 degrees Celsius) or higher
- Chills
- Headache
- Rash or itching
- Dizzy or lightheaded
- Trouble breathing
- Chest pain
- Joint pain
- Nausea/Vomiting