

***What Are Biologic Infusions? ***

Biologic infusions are usually given to you at a hospital or healthcare facility but can sometimes be given at home. They are liquid medications administered to you through an intravenous (IV) needle in one of the veins in your arm. They are not given all at once; they are delivered slowly over a certain period. This process is called infusion.

These medications are created using advanced technology. They are called “biologics” because they can be made from living cells and proteins, sugars, and DNA. The word “biologics” refers to many medications and even includes commonly prescribed products like insulin.

Many biologics are used to adapt your body’s immune response.

How Should I Prepare For My First Biologic Infusion Appointment?

Kindly ensure you have done all required labs, dates have been confirmed for medications to be made available and booking has been secured at least a week before your scheduled infusion.

When you arrive, a nurse or doctor will place an IV needle connected to a thin tube into your vein. When the IV is successfully placed, your nurse will start the infusion, and the medication will move through the thin tube and into your vein.

- Drinking lots of water before your appointment is best to make inserting the needle easier for your nurse.
- Wearing loose and comfortable clothes with easy access to your arms also makes infusion set-up a smoother process.
- It’s very important to ensure you’re not feeling sick when you attend your appointment.
- You can eat before coming for the infusion, during and after the infusion
- You are allowed to take your regular medications as well.
- If you are coming for a steroid infusion your doctor would tell you to halt prednisolone tablets if you are on them for those days

This is both to prevent exposing others at the infusion centre to infections and to protect yourself.

Most biologic medications weaken your immune system, and if you have an infection brewing, your infusion could make it worse.

What Should I Expect During A Biologic Infusion?

Biologic infusion times vary, but you will likely be sitting for at least 30 minutes to 6 hours

So you'll want to bring something to help pass the time, like a book or magazine.

Make sure your electronics/phones are charged, and bring headphones if you will listen to anything on your device during your infusion.

At the start, your temperature, blood pressure, and heart rate will be checked.

A healthcare professional will check on you at least once during the infusion.

You may be asked to stay at the infusion centre for a few minutes afterwards to ensure you do not have an allergic reaction.

After your first infusion, your healthcare provider will likely want to watch you for a certain period — usually between 15 to 60 minutes — for any signs of an allergic reaction (e.g., swollen lips, shortness of breath, rashes). You should also be provided information about who to call if you have problems after leaving the clinic.

Headaches are common after an infusion. Changes in the amount of fluid in your body typically cause them.

These are temporary and should go away within 24 hours.

Your risk of infection is higher after getting any kind of infusion that weakens your immune system.

Kindly call the clinic if you develop a fever or other symptoms of an infection.

Each biologic infusion is different, and they all have their unique side effects. Discuss these with your doctor before your first infusion so you know what to expect.

Lastly, it takes weeks to months to see improvement in your condition. It is unusual for symptoms to get better right away. Talk to your doctor about how to best manage your symptoms until your infusion starts providing relief.