

Colorado Infectious Disease Associates, LLP

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Basics of outpatient IV antibiotic therapy (page 1/2)

- Giving yourself IV medication sounds scary at first, but it's much simpler than what you see in the hospital. Antibiotics are mixed for you and put either into syringes or into pressurized, rubber balls called elastomeric devices. You or someone in your household will be taught how to administer your antibiotics.
- A few antibiotics have to be given by a small, lightweight pump that goes in a shoulder bag and runs continuously. If you run into any problems with the pump, our infusion nurses or the home health company will be able to help you.
- IV antibiotics require close monitoring for side effects, including issues with the IV itself and possible reactions to the medication. You will need weekly blood draws to monitor your organ function and check blood markers for infection.
- For the reasons above, **we require all of our patients on IV antibiotics to be seen once a week for the duration of treatment.** If you live far away or will be going to a skilled nursing or rehab facility, we can be somewhat flexible, but *this requirement is for your safety* to ensure that we get the information we need to make better treatment decisions
- We encourage you to **sign up for our Patient Portal** to get access to your lab results and the ability to send secure messages to your doctor. Just go to our website and click the link in the middle of the homepage.
- Most of your follow up visits will be with one of our nurse practitioners – both are highly skilled and will coordinate your treatment plan with the doctor who first saw you.

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Basics of outpatient IV antibiotic therapy (page 2/2)

- Here are some common misconceptions about IV therapy outside the hospital:
 - You won't be walking around with an IV pole and a bulky pump like you see in the hospital.
 - You won't have to stick yourself with a needle.
 - You don't need any medical training or experience to do this. We make the process as easy as possible for home, so generally, all you have to do is twist plastic hubs together and maybe push a plunger on a syringe.
 - Some people worry that the IV line placement will be painful or that they will be aware of the line moving inside the vein. In fact, the only part of the line placement that causes discomfort is putting a needle through the skin to access the vein.
- And a few pointers for activities while you are undergoing treatment:
 - Try not to lift more than 10 pounds with the arm that has the IV line in it, and avoid activities that involve wide, swinging movements, such as golf or tennis – the IV line could get pulled out.
 - You can shower with a line in place but will need to cover it in plastic. Your infusion nurse can show you how to do this. Avoid activities that immerse your line in water.
 - It's generally best to stay close to home (or at least close to our office!) while you are getting treatment.