

INTRAVENOUS INFUSIONS AND/OR INJECTIONS

1. Introduction

Intravenous (IV) infusions have been included on the WADA List of Prohibited Substances and Methods under section *M2. Prohibited Methods; Chemical and Physical Manipulation* since 2005¹. An IV infusion or injection is the supply of fluid and/or prescribed medication by drip or push directly into a vein.

Since January 2018, intravenous infusions are prohibited both in-competition and out-of-competition if the volume delivered exceeds 100 ml within a 12-hour period. Prior to 2018, the volume was limited to 50 ml within a 6-hour period. Therefore, infusions or injections of 100 ml or less within a 12-hour period are permitted unless the infused/injected substance is on the Prohibited List.

The wording in the 2018 Prohibited List states that the following is prohibited: *Intravenous infusions and/or injections of more than a total of 100 ml per 12-hour period except for those legitimately received in the course of hospital treatments, surgical procedures or clinical diagnostic investigations*¹.

The wording in the Prohibited List for IV infusions is unique in that the method is not prohibited under the three exceptions stated above. However, a TUE may be necessary for a Prohibited Substance delivered by intravenous infusion even if the infusion itself is delivered in the setting of one of the three exceptions.

IV infusions are included on the Prohibited List mainly because some athletes could use this Prohibited Method to:

- a) enhance their performance by increasing plasma volume levels;
- b) mask the use of a Prohibited Substance;
- c) distort the values of their Athlete Biological Passport.

Reiterating what has been stated above: Infusions or injections of more than 100 ml within a 12-hour period are prohibited unless the infused/injected substance is administered during a hospital treatment, surgical procedure or clinical diagnostic investigation.

Therefore, athletes should always apply for a TUE, if they are administered an intravenous treatment (more than 100 ml/12hrs), in any of the following situations:

*TUEC Guidelines
Medical Information to Support the Decisions of TUE Committees
Intravenous Infusions*

- a) medical practitioner's office, suite, home, tent or vehicle;
- b) IV clinics or any clinic/treatment room or centre outside of a hospital facility unless a clinical diagnostic investigation or surgical procedure has been performed;
- c) event organizers' medical facility, tent, first aid station, or start-finish line facility.

Please consult the Tables in the Appendix for more details on the principles and examples of when IV infusion/injections of certain substances are permitted or prohibited.

If a non-prohibited substance is infused or injected without being part of a hospital treatment, surgical procedure or clinical diagnostic investigation, a TUE must be submitted for this Prohibited Method if more than 100 ml of fluid in a 12-hour period is infused or injected.

If a Prohibited Substance is administered via IV infusion or injection, a TUE application must be submitted for the Prohibited Substance regardless of whether the infusion is less than 100 ml or the setting/circumstances under which it is administered.

In situations of medical emergency or under clinical time constraints, a retroactive TUE application pursuant to Article of the International Standard for Therapeutic Use Exemptions is acceptable².

2. Diagnosis

A. Medical History

A summary of the athlete's history and the findings of a physical examination should confirm the diagnosis and establish the need for an IV infusion. A precise description of the clinical situation and specific medical indication for the IV infusion must be given in the TUE application.

Note that regardless of volume administered, an IV infusion or injection given as part of a hospital treatment, surgical procedure or clinical diagnostic investigation is not prohibited. Only if a prohibited substance is administered would one need to apply for a TUE. The athlete is nevertheless advised to obtain and keep a copy of the medical records from the intervention or procedure.

B. Diagnostic Criteria

A clearly defined diagnosis should be established in accordance with the International Classification of Diseases standards of the World Health Organization (ICD-10).

C. Relevant medical information

A detailed description of the substance to be infused, the rate of infusion and any other relevant clinical information from the treating physician should be included. It must be demonstrated why an alternative permitted therapy, for example oral rehydration in case of dehydration, is not a valid option. Any existing co-morbidities that would influence the decision for granting a TUE should also be included.

3. Medical Best Practice Treatment

Legitimate medical indications for IV infusions are well documented and are most commonly associated with either medical emergencies or in-patient hospital treatment.

When an IV infusion is administered to an athlete, the following criteria should be fulfilled:

- a) a well described medical condition and diagnosis;
- b) it was not reasonable to try a permitted alternative treatment;
- c) the treatment has been ordered by a physician and administered by qualified medical personnel in an appropriate medical setting;
- d) adequate medical records of the treatment.

The use of IV infusions in sport is commonly linked with rehydration after exhaustive effort, and this situation is arguably the major cause of debate. It must be understood that the use of IV fluid replacement following exercise and/or acute weight reduction to correct mild to moderate dehydration is not clinically indicated nor substantiated by the medical literature. There is a well-established body of scientific evidence to confirm that oral rehydration is the preferred therapeutic choice, potentially even more effective than IV infusion³⁻¹⁵.

A. Name of Prohibited Method

IV infusion or injection of >100 ml within a 12-hour period unless legitimately received in the course of hospital treatments, surgical procedures or clinical investigations.

B. Recommended Duration

Depending on diagnosis and on the particular clinical situation, but if the infusion is a single intervention, the TUE should be valid for a relatively short duration.

4. Other Non-Prohibited Alternative Treatments

Oral rehydration or oral delivery of medication.

5. Consequences to Health if Treatment is Withheld

These will be dependent on the clinical situation. However, in case of a medical emergency, a possible consequence of withholding treatment could result in serious harm to health or even death. Therefore, the health and well-being of the athlete must always remain the priority. Consequently, when an IV infusion is considered by medical personnel as a potential treatment option, an athlete's medical needs should be assessed in the same way as any other patient. If an athlete is judged by medical personnel to be clinically unstable and/or in an emergency situation, treatment with IV fluids should never be withheld on grounds that the method is on the List of Prohibited Substances and Methods.

6. Treatment Monitoring

Continuous evaluation by treating physician or someone acting on his/her behalf until the desired treatment effect has been achieved.

7. TUE Duration and Recommended Review Process

The duration of the TUE is usually for a short time period surrounding the initial medical intervention. Longer usage of an IV infusion would typically occur in a hospital setting and would therefore not require a TUE.

8. Any Appropriate Cautionary Matters

It is the responsibility of the treating physician to evaluate the clinical indication for an IV infusion or injection. However, it is the responsibility of the athlete to inform the treating physician that intravenous infusions are prohibited in non-emergency situations. It is also the responsibility of the athlete to initiate and complete a subsequent TUE application, if and when needed.

It must be emphasized that at all times, the health and well-being of the athlete must remain the priority during medical investigations and treatments. TUECs should apply sound clinical judgment to their interpretation of the ISTUE, but be mindful of the inappropriate use of IV infusion in non-emergency situations where alternative permitted and evidence-based alternatives exist.

References

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15. Noakes TD, Walsh RM, Hawley JA, Dennis SC. Impaired high-intensity cycling performance time at low levels of dehydration. *Int. J. Sports Med.* 1994 Oct; 15(7): 392-398.
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*TUEC Guidelines
Medical Information to Support the Decisions of TUE Committees
Intravenous Infusions*

APPENDIX

Below are three tables, which illustrate the possible four combinations of a Method and a Substance that may be either Permitted or Prohibited during the administration of an IV infusion.

TABLE 1

In principle, four possibilities exist when both the substance and the method may be either Permitted or Prohibited

Method and Substances 2 x 2 table

Method Prohibited Substance Prohibited	Method Permitted Substance Prohibited
Method Prohibited Substance Permitted	Method Permitted Substance Permitted

TABLE 2

Requirements for a TUE when the infusion is NOT given during a hospital treatment, surgical procedure or clinical diagnostic investigation. (Prohibited substance/Permitted Substance names are used as examples)

<p>Prohibited Method: IV infusion of >100 ml within a 12-hour period</p> <p>Prohibited Substance: Insulin</p> <p>Need TUE for substance</p> <p>Need TUE for method</p>	<p>Permitted Method: Infusion of ≤100 ml within a 12-hour period</p> <p>Prohibited Substance: Insulin</p> <p>Need TUE for substance</p>
<p>Prohibited Method: IV infusion of >100 ml within a 12-hour period</p> <p>Permitted substance: Glucose/saline</p> <p>Need TUE for method**</p>	<p>Permitted Method: Infusion of ≤100 ml within a 12-hour period</p> <p>Permitted Substance: Liquid iron supplement</p> <p>NO TUE</p>

** Note that, even though the substance may not be prohibited, a TUE for an infusion >100 ml may necessitate clinical justification for the use of the substance.

TABLE 3

Requirements for a TUE when infusion is given during a hospital treatment, surgical procedure or clinical diagnostic investigation.

<p>Prohibited Method: IV infusion of >100 ml/12 h</p> <p>Prohibited Substance: Insulin</p> <p>Need TUE for substance</p>	<p>Permitted Method: Infusion of ≤100 ml/12h</p> <p>Prohibited substance: Insulin</p> <p>Need TUE for substance</p>
<p>Prohibited Method: IV infusion of >100 ml/6 h</p> <p>Permitted substance: Glucose/saline</p> <p>NO TUE</p>	<p>Permitted Method: Infusion of ≤100 ml/6 h</p> <p>Permitted Substance: Liquid iron supplement</p> <p>NO TUE</p>