

# What's in My Bag?



## **Top 5 Items in My Infusion Bag**

I was an 18-year-old college freshman when I was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2010 . Since then, we have more medications than ever to help slow disease progression! I have been on injectable medications, oral medications and now an infusible medication. After having my son in December 2021, my neurologist and I had the conversation about which MS disease-modifying therapy I should take. We decided that Ocrevus would be the best option for me.

Infusion treatments were new to me, so a lot of thought went into the process of getting prepared for my first infusion. I am a planner and a methodical packer, so since my third infusion earlier this year, I have a list of needed items I pack in my backpack for treatment days.

Before we get into the specific items, let's talk about what I typically wear on infusion day. An Ocrevus infusion can last around five hours, give, or take. Since I know I am going to be sitting in an infusion chair for a while, comfort is one of my top priorities when going for an infusion. I gravitate towards comfortable workout clothes or loose-fitting items.

Now that we are dressed and ready for the big day, here are the top five items in my bag!

### **1. Snacks**

Since infusions take a handful of hours, snacks are a must in my bag. I typically start the

infusion process around 8 a.m., so I always pack a sandwich for lunch or something simple that I can easily grab from my bag. I bring both salty and sweet snacks because sometimes the infusion makes me want one more than the other. If I become really thirsty, the salty snacks hit the spot more than the sweet.

## **2. Large Water Bottle**

Honestly, I struggle with managing my water intake. Hydration is important though, so I always bring my 40 oz water cup with me to my infusion. I receive my infusion in an oncology center, so they have a water dispenser in the large open room where I can refill my cup if needed. The availability of certain items, including filtered water, may vary by infusion center.

## **3. Entertainment**

I always need things to do that make the time go by faster when I am going for my infusion, so pre-downloaded movies and TV shows are a must. My iPad is often the first item that gets packed in my bag. If you love to read, then be sure to bring a book (hard copy, audiobook, Kindle) or get caught up on podcasts. Be sure to have everything downloaded before getting to the infusion center as sometimes you can't rely on internet speeds at the center.

## **4. Blanket & Fuzzy Socks**

When I get the pre-infusion medications via my IV, it makes me feel cold, especially my arms. I always bring a comfy blanket in my bag for those times when I am feeling chilly. In addition to the blanket, I always wear socks and sneakers to my infusion. For some reason, my toes are always the first ones to get cold.

## **5. Mints / Lifesavers / Throat Lozenges**

Having a bag of mints, flavored lifesavers or even flavored throat lozenges are a necessity in my opinion. During my infusions, I have had a very minimal reaction that made my throat itchy. The reaction lasted for about 20 minutes and then it went back to normal. During those 20 minutes, I found it helpful to have these items handy to pop in my mouth to help soothe my throat.

## **Bonus Item!**

Don't forget your headphones. My noise canceling headphones help drown out the outside noise and help me focus on what I am doing, whether I am doing some work on my computer or watching my favorite show!

Hopefully this guide helps you feel more confident getting prepared for your infusion. These items are just some of the items that I bring with me, but they are definitely not the only items that you may need. Feel free to adjust your unique list of items. Remember, it is better

to be over-prepared than underprepared.