

Summary Points to Remember

- It is very important to seek help if you experience any side effects.

Intravenous Iron Infusions

Your doctor has decided you need an iron infusion. Iron is given to prevent or treat anaemia.

The word “anaemia” means a low red blood cell count, or less of the red blood cell pigment, haemoglobin, in your blood. A good red blood cell count is important because red blood cells carry oxygen. Every breath we take fills our lungs with oxygen. Our red blood cells pass through the lungs, soak up the oxygen, and carry it to the rest of the body.

Iron is one of the essential building blocks of red blood cells. If you don't have enough iron, you will not have healthy red blood cells, and your blood will carry less oxygen. You may experience:

1. Tiredness
2. Shortness of breath
3. No energy to work or exercise
4. Pale skin
5. Light headedness
6. poor memory
7. Fast heart rate

Injections

You may already be having injections called Eprex, Aranesp, Neorecormon, Mircera or Novicrit to treat your anaemia. These injections are different to iron and they do not replace the need for iron. In fact, your iron infusion is needed for these injections to work properly.

Why can't I just take iron tablets?

Often iron tablets are not powerful enough to build up your iron stores adequately. And sometimes, for various reasons, your body is unable to absorb any of the iron you take as tablets. Then we may need to give you an infusion of iron.

Coming into hospital for an iron infusion

An appointment has been made for you to have your iron in our day procedure unit.

It's important to come on time for your appointment. If you think you may be late, or you are not coming at all, please call 9342 8401 and let us know as soon as possible so someone else can have your appointment time.

Usually the whole procedure will take a couple of hours. Your first iron infusion may take slightly longer as we need to test to see if you are allergic to the infusion.

Comfort and Pain. One of the nursing or medical staff will need to put an IV drip into your arm. The iron itself

does not hurt.

Food. You do not need to fast. Eat your usual meals before coming into the hospital.

Medications. Take your usual medications as prescribed. Please bring any medication you may need during the day with you.

Activity. Please bring a book or magazine with you to help pass the time. You can drive home from the hospital and resume all your normal activities.

Side effects: Side effects are rare. They may include:

- Headache.
- Nausea or vomiting
- Joint or muscle pain
- Changes to your blood pressure
- Shortness of breath
- Itch

The following is extremely rare, however, some people may suffer delayed side effects up to 48 hours after the iron infusion:

If you have:

1. Dizziness
2. Joint stiffness
3. Fever or rash
4. Back pain
5. Severe itch

Contact the hospital immediately on 9342 7000 and ask for the renal registrar.

If you:

1. Feel faint
2. Have chest pain
3. Have neck or face swelling
4. Have difficulty breathing

You must ring an ambulance (dial 000) and be taken to your nearest hospital.

Questions

If you need more information speak to your nephrologist.

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