

Key Points to Remember:

- This information leaflet answers some common questions about iron infusions.
- Iron infusions are used to treat low iron levels.
- Side effects are uncommon, however your nurse will closely monitor you during and for a short time after your infusion. It is important that you remain in the hospital for this period of time.
- Some patients may experience side effects 1 to 2 days later. Mostly these will settle by themselves, however if you are concerned contact your doctor or the hospital for advice.

Why might I need an iron infusion?

Iron is used to make haemoglobin (the part of our red blood cells that carry oxygen around our bodies). If you do not have enough iron you will not have healthy red blood cells, and your blood will carry less oxygen. This is called anaemia.

The most common way to treat low iron levels is to take iron by mouth as a tablet or liquid.

Intravenous (IV) iron (ie administered through a vein) may be needed if you:

- Are not able to take iron orally (tablets or liquid)
- Are not absorbing oral iron or iron tablets are not working
- Require a quick rise in iron levels (for example before major surgery, late in pregnancy or to avoid blood transfusion)
- Have chronic kidney or heart disease
- Have experienced blood loss after gastrointestinal bleeding

What can I expect when I receive an iron infusion?

One of our nursing or medical staff will put an IV drip into your arm. The iron infusion itself does not hurt and depending on the type of iron should take 15 to 75 minutes to complete. You do not need to fast before receiving an iron infusion. Take your usual medications as prescribed.

Although very uncommon, some people may have a serious allergic reaction. In rare cases this can be life threatening. You will be closely monitored during the iron infusion, and for 30 minutes after.

Are there any side effects with intravenous iron?

The most common side effects are generally mild and may include:

- Headache, nausea or vomiting, joint or muscle pain
- Changes to your blood pressure or heart rate
- Changes in taste (eg metallic taste)

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Skin staining (brown discolouration) may occur due to leakage of iron into the tissues surrounding the needle site. **This is not common but the stain can be long lasting or permanent.** Your nurse will monitor for this during the infusion, however please inform staff straight away if you experience any discomfort, burning, redness or swelling at the needle site.

Some people may suffer delayed side effects up to 2 days after the iron infusion. Mostly these effects, such as headache, joint pain, or itch, will settle down themselves over a couple of days. If you are concerned, contact your doctor or the infusion centre for advice.

If you have trouble breathing, have face, neck or mouth swelling, have chest pain or feel faint seek urgent medical attention or call an ambulance on 000.

Please tick if any of the following apply to you and a member of the medical team will see you:

- Are pregnant/trying to become pregnant
- Have a history of severe asthma, eczema or other allergies
- Have had a reaction to any type of iron injection or infusion in the past
- Have a history of high iron levels, haemochromatosis or liver problems
- Have (or may have) an infection/fever at the moment
- Have any questions about any side effects that may worry you
- Have received an iron infusion within the past month (unless being used during dialysis)
- Have any questions about alternative treatment options

Please note, this brochure does not contain all available information and does not take the place of talking to your doctor about your iron infusion.

Contact

9342 7000 (switchboard)

Practitioner to complete:

Clinician Name:

Ward/Department:

Pager (if applicable):

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