

# Intravenous Iron Therapy

## Information for Patients



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# Why do I need an Iron Infusion?

## What does iron do?

Iron plays a key role in many processes, especially in helping to make red blood cells and enable them to carry oxygen around your body.

You have been diagnosed as having iron deficiency by your GP or a hospital doctor, midwife or nurse. A lack of iron can make us feel tired, dizzy, irritable, disturbed sleep, dry skin or hair loss.

Intravenous iron is used to treat this when iron tablets are not working or where there is a need to correct the iron levels in your body more quickly. If you require regular iron infusions (at least every 3 months) then please ask your doctor or nurse to discuss the risks of hypophosphatemia with you.

## What does it involve?

The drug that we use is a liquid iron solution called FDI (which is short for ferric derisomaltose). It is an intravenous iron treatment that is administered through a small needle called a cannula which is inserted directly into a vein. The iron is delivered into your bloodstream via a drip while you are being monitored by a nurse. The iron infusion doesn't hurt but you may feel a cold sensation in your arm.

There is a risk (uncommon) that iron could leak from the cannula and cause a stain to your skin which may be permanent. We advise our patients to try and keep their arm or hand as still as possible during the infusion. If you experience any pain, discomfort or notice any leaking around the treatment site, please let the nurse know immediately



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## **Before receiving treatment**

Having an iron infusion does not require any preparation from your side. Have your usual meals on the day and make sure that you are well hydrated. Continue taking all your usual medications but stop taking any iron tablets the day before your appointment for the iron infusion.

Wear loose, comfortable clothes with short sleeves and you can bring a book or something to watch. We advise that you tell the nurses about your medical history and if you have any allergies.

## **How long will the infusion take?**

Your appointment will usually be booked for 90 minutes to allow us to do the paperwork, insert the cannula and administer the iron infusion.

## **Are there any side effects during or after treatment?**

Like all medicines, iron can cause side effects and although the majority of people experience no problems, please tell the nurse immediately if you feel unwell or different in any way during the infusion.

After the infusion some patients may experience a rise in temperature, headache or joint pain in the days after the infusion. Although uncomfortable, these effects usually settle on their own but sometimes using simple painkillers e.g. paracetamol, can help ease the discomfort. If you become more unwell or have any other worrying symptoms eg. confusion, pins and needles, palpitations or breathlessness while at home please contact your doctor for advice.

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## When can I expect to see any improvement

The time it takes for each patient to feel an improvement in their symptoms is very individual. Some people will feel better after only a few days while others will feel an improvement after a few weeks or a month. You may be asked to have a Full Blood Count blood sample taken some weeks or months after the treatment to check if you haemoglobin level is improving.

If you are waiting to have surgery, you may also receive a letter from the Anaemia Clinic asking you to contact the team about any further treatment that might be required once you have been notified of your date for the operation.

## Iron Tablets

If you are taking iron tablets then you do not have to take them for 5 days after the iron infusion and then you can restart them. If you are having problems taking these tablets then please discuss this with the Anaemia clinic nurses or the person who originally prescribed them to you.

**If you have any queries or need any further information please contact the team who booked your appointment.**

Ambulatory Care	01225 821657
Cardiology Day Unit	01225 825394
Biologics Day Unit	01225 821096
Anaemia Clinic	01225 825504