

# Intravenous **Iron** Infusion

## 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 in the body, especially in helping to make red blood cells. Haemoglobin is the red substance in blood, which combines with oxygen and carries it around the body.

Your GP, hospital doctor, midwife or nurse has diagnosed you as having iron deficiency. A lack of iron can make you feel tired, dizzy, irritable, and may cause dry skin, hair loss or disturbed sleep.

An infusion of 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.

## What does an iron infusion 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 in your hand or arm. The iron is delivered into your bloodstream via a drip while a nurse is monitoring you. The iron infusion does not 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 you to keep your 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 your treatment

You do not need to do anything to prepare for your iron infusion. Have your usual meals on the day and make sure that you are well hydrated to make it easier to find a vein. 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 but 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 have any other worrying symptoms while at home please contact your GP for advice.

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## When can I expect to see any improvement?

Patients will take a different amount of time to see an improvement in their symptoms. A doctor, nurse or midwife may ask you to have a Full Blood Count test taken some weeks or months after the treatment to check if your haemoglobin level is improving.

If you are waiting to have surgery, further treatment may be necessary. We will send you a letter with more information about this if required.

## Taking iron tablets after your infusion

**If you are taking iron tablets 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	<a href="mailto:ruh-tr.TransfusionTeam@nhs.net">ruh-tr.TransfusionTeam@nhs.net</a>

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