

IRON DEFICIENCY - PATIENT INFORMATION

This leaflet answers some common questions about iron deficiency and intravenous (IV) iron infusion. It does not contain all available information and does not take the place of talking to your doctor about your case.

Why is iron important?

Our bodies need iron. We need it to make red blood cells which carry oxygen around our body. It is also important in muscle strength, energy and good mental function.

Why might I need IV iron?

The most common way to treat iron deficiency is to take iron by mouth as a tablet or liquid. This works well for most people and is usually tried first. Some people may need iron to be given straight into the body through a vein, this is called IV iron infusion. The iron is given through a needle and infused into your vein. The infusion is made up of iron, not blood.

IV iron may be needed if you:

- Are not able to take iron tablet or liquid.
- Are not responding to iron tablets/liquid or not absorbing them.
- Need to get your iron levels up quickly (eg before surgery, late in pregnancy, to avoid blood transfusion).
- If you have chronic kidney or chronic heart disease.

Are there any side effects with IV iron?

Generally, when side effects do occur, they are mild and settle down on their own.

The common side effects:

- Headache, dizziness, flushing, nausea
- Mild muscle and joint aches
- Change in taste (eg metallic)
- Skin reaction/irritation at infusion site
- Changes in blood pressure and heart rate

Uncommon and rare side effects

- Abdominal pain, indigestion, vomiting, diarrhoea, constipation, flatulence
- Rash, itchiness
- Fever, fatigue, chills, rigors
- Shortness of breath
- Fluid retention in arms and legs

Although rare some people may have a serious, potentially life threatening, allergic reaction. For this reason you will be closely monitored while having your infusion, and for 30 minutes afterwards.

Skin staining (brown discolouration) may occur due to leakage of iron into the tissue around the needle (drip) site. This is not common but the stain can be long lasting or permanent.

Sometimes side effects (eg headache, muscle or joint ache) can start 1-2 days later. Most of the time they will settle down by themselves over the next couple of days. If any side effects worry you please do not hesitate to contact the clinic for advice or call your doctor.

If you develop any chest pain, difficulty breathing, dizziness, neck or mouth swelling, please seek urgent medical attention by calling the ambulance (000).

What I need to do before the appointment?

There is no special preparation needed before your iron infusion.

- Continue to take all your normal medications.
- If you are taking iron tablets/liquids please stop at least 7 days before the infusion.
- On the day please wear loose comfortable clothing. Please wear a short sleeve top.
- You can eat and drink as normal on the day.
- Please be well hydrated. Aim to drink 2-3 glasses of water before your appointment.
- You can drive yourself to and from the appointment.

What will happen at the appointment?

You will be assessed by a doctor before your infusion. The doctor will assess you to ensure that an iron infusion is appropriate for you, and also look into the possible cause/s of your iron deficiency. This will also give you an opportunity to ask any questions you may have about your infusion and your iron deficiency.

After that either the doctor or nurse will go through the infusion process with you and get you to sign a consent form.

A cannula (needle) will then be put into your arm to enable the iron solution to be given.

If a suitable vein cannot be found, the infusion may be rescheduled.

The iron will take 15-30 minutes.

The nurse will take regular observations, before, during and after the infusion.

During the infusion if you feel unwell in any way please tell the nurse immediately (eg headache, nausea, dizziness, chest pain, short of breath, pain at the cannula site).

Please allow 1-1.5 hour of the whole appointment.

What happens after the infusion?

After your infusion you will be required to wait 30 minutes for observations. Please do not plan to rush off to any other appointments or commitments.

The iron will take a few weeks to have its full effects and your doctor will check your blood iron levels in 6 weeks.

Do not restart your oral iron tablet/liquid unless directed by your doctor.

How much does an iron infusion cost?

Cost of the infusion is \$180. The Medicare rebate is \$75.75, leaving a gap of \$104.25.

Payment is required at the time of the treatment. We accept cash, VISA, Mastercard and EFTPOS.

Where can I park?

Free parking is available at the clinic. There is also free street parking.

What are the opening hours?

Monday – Friday, 8am to 3:30pm. To book you appointment please call: **9478 4665**