

## **PATIENT INFORMATION**

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

### **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 orally as a tablet or liquid. This works well for most people and is usually the first thing that is tried to fix Iron deficiency. Some people may need iron to be given straight into the body through a vein, this is called intravenous (IV) iron infusion. The Iron we give you is NOT a Blood Product.

IV iron may be needed if you:

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

### **Are there any risks or 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 (e.g., metallic)
- Skin reaction/irritation at infusion site
- Changes in blood pressure and heart rate
- Bruising at the injection site.

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
- Low phosphate levels (hypophosphataemia)

Sometimes side effects (e.g., 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.



### **Skin staining**

Skin staining (brown discolouration) may occur due to leakage of iron into the tissue around the IV Cannula (Needle) site. This is not common, but the stain can be long lasting or permanent. The first sign that this may be occurring is pain at the side of the IV Cannula so please tell the nurse immediately if you are experiencing any pain during the infusion.

### **Anaphylaxis**

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.

We are equipped to deal with anaphylaxis but there is a potential that if this occurs an ambulance will need to be called and you will need to be transported to Hospital. You will be responsible for the cost of the ambulance.

### **Hypophosphataemia**

Occasionally, having an iron infusion can cause your phosphate levels to drop. Symptoms of this are bone pain, fatigue, muscle weakness and irritability. If you have these symptoms, please contact us or your own GP asap.

Diagnosis of this condition is done with a blood test and if it is confirmed, you may be required to take Phosphate supplements to correct the imbalance.

### **How much does it cost?**

The assessment and planning appointment will be \$142.15 (out of pocket cost \$20.00, for Medicare card holders).

The Iron infusion appointment will be \$250.00 (out of pocket cost \$167.10, for Medicare card holders).

If you have chosen to combine your assessment and planning appointment and iron infusion to be done all on the SAME day, the cost will be \$355.00 (out of pocket cost \$232.85, for Medicare card holders).

All other appointments will be charged at our standard rates.

*Standard appointment \$86.00 (out of pocket cost \$43.15, for Medicare card holders)*

*Long appointment \$140.00 (out of pocket cost \$57.10, for Medicare card holders)*

*Prolong appointment \$177.70 (out of pocket cost \$55.55, for Medicare card holders)*

*Video / Phone appointment \$86.00 (out of pocket cost \$43.15, for Medicare card holders)*

### **What happens at the assessment and planning appointment?**

- An extensive history will be taken.
- Implementation of a management plan which may include:
  - Arrangement of any necessary blood test/s
  - looking into the possible cause/s of your iron deficiency.

- What sort of treatments you have had previously and how successful they were
- Other investigations related to iron deficiency e.g., Colonoscopies or Ultrasound.
- Opportunity to ask any questions you may have about your iron deficiency / iron deficiency anaemia.
- If an Iron infusion is necessary:
  - Process will be discussed.
  - Consent form signed.
  - Prescription supplied (please bring the Iron medication to the infusion appointment)

*If you have copies of recent blood test's (within the last 3months) scans, or any procedures such as colonoscopy, pelvic ultrasound, please email prior to your appointment or let us know that you will be bringing with you on the day.*

### **Preparation for the infusion appointment?**

There is no special preparation needed before your iron infusion.

- Please ensure that you let us know if you have had a previous iron infusion, particularly if you had any side-effects of concern.
- 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 a short sleeve top because we need to be able to access your upper arm and loose comfortable clothing.
- 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 this makes it easier for us to find a suitable vein and can reduce some of the side effects.
- You can drive yourself to and from the appointment.
- You can go about your normal daily duties after the infusion. If you are very physically active, you may need to pull back on the amount of exercise you do for the next day or two to prevent dehydration.
- Don't forget to bring your Iron medication with you.

### **What happens at the Infusion appointment?**

- On the day of the infusion, a cannula with the metal needle will be put into your arm to enable the iron solution to be given into your vein. The needle is then withdrawn leaving a plastic tube in your vein.
- If a suitable vein cannot be found, the infusion may be rescheduled. Your doctor or nurse will discuss options with you on the day if this is necessary.
- The nurse will stay with you in the room and will take regular observations, before, during and after the infusion. If you are worried at any stage, please feel free to ask any questions you have. We are here to put your mind at ease.
- During the infusion if you feel unwell in any way, please tell the nurse immediately (e.g., headache, nausea, dizziness, chest pain or tightness, short of breath, pain at the cannula site).



### **How long will my iron infusion take?**

The iron infusion will take 15-30 minutes, but additional time is required for set-up and monitoring in our clinic for at least 30 minutes after your infusion. This time may be extended if there are any complications or issues during the infusion, so please don't plan to rush off to any other commitments.

### **After the iron infusion**

#### **When can I go home?**

Once the infusion is finished, we ask you to stay with us in the waiting room for at least 30 minutes so we can monitor you for any delayed reactions. Please let our receptionist know if you feel unwell while you are waiting. After the 30min wait, the nurse will call you back to remove the cannula and do a final set of observations. Providing you are feeling well, you can then go home. It's safe to drive after your infusion and you should be ok to go back to work if you need to do so.

#### **Will there be any side-effects and what do I do about them?**

Generally, when the common side effects do occur, they are mild and settle down on their own with good hydration, Panadol and rest. If any side effects worry you or are interfering with your daily activities, you can contact our clinic nurse for advice on **(08 9478 4665)** or call your doctor during business hours. You also can contact **HealthDirect on 1800 022 222** for nurse advice afterhours.

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

We will send you an email survey 1-2 days after your infusion about any side effects that you may have experienced. This will take less than 5 mins to complete. Please complete and return to us via the link. This survey helps us keep records of what sort of side effects patients experience and to ensure you are ok.

#### **How long does it take for my Iron levels to improve?**

You should notice any symptoms of low iron such as tiredness, shortness of breath and dizziness get better approximately 4-6 weeks after the infusion. This does vary from person to person. Most people are feeling much better by about 6 weeks.

#### **Should I continue to take my iron tablets?**

Please do not take any oral iron supplements unless you are directed to, by your GP.

#### **How long will the effects of the iron infusion last?**

There are several causes of iron deficiency, including low dietary intake, conditions such as coeliac disease, excessive blood loss, kidney disease or a combination of these. The length of time the iron infusion lasts really depends on the reason of the deficiency and what steps are taken to rectify the cause. This is why it is important that any testing or treatment that the doctor recommends is completed.



### **Should I have follow-up testing?**

Yes, you will be given a pathology form to have a blood test in 6 weeks' time to check your haemoglobin and ferritin (iron) levels.

**Please get your blood test done 6 weeks after your iron infusion appointment.** You don't need to fast for this. Don't forget to drink a big glass of water or two before your test – it makes it easier for the phlebotomist to find a suitable vein to take your blood.

If for any reason you lose the form, please let us or your normal GP know so we can re-issue, it is very important that these blood tests are done.

### **Results Follow-up**

If the doctor is satisfied with your results, you will receive a letter via email with your results attached. The email will be password protected – the password consists of 4 digits and will be your date of birth (DDMM).

If there are any concerns with your results, one of our receptionists will contact you to book a telephone consult with one of our GPs.

If you would like to book a follow up telephone consult to discuss the results with one of our GPs, whether they are satisfactory or not, please speak to one of our friendly receptionists.

You will receive a SMS reminder for your telephone consult the day before your appointment date.

If you've had bloods taken on the day of the infusion, our nurse or GP will call you if there are any results of concern, otherwise please discuss the results with your doctor at your 6-week follow-up consultation.

***We also strongly recommend you have a repeat blood test at 6 months post iron infusion.***

\*\*If you've been given a referral for a pelvic ultrasound, please contact the relevant business to make that appointment as soon as possible. **You need to take your referral with you to this appointment.**

Once you have made your pelvic ultrasound appointment, please make a LONG (face-to-face) appointment with us two weeks later to discuss the results - **fees will apply** (see fees above).

Please expect to receive another email survey from the WA Iron Centre 5 weeks after your iron infusion. Your valuable feedback helps inform us about any adverse reactions to iron infusions so we can keep improving the care we provide for our patients. It would be greatly appreciated if you could complete the survey via the link, thank you!

**If you have any questions, please check our website, send us an email, or give our friendly staff a call so we can help you.**



Thankyou!  
WA Iron Centre Team