



# A guide to...

## Intravenous Iron Therapy for adults over 16 years

### *Patient Information*

#### How to contact us

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If you need this leaflet in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01923 217 198** or email [westherts.pals@nhs.net](mailto:westherts.pals@nhs.net)



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# For management of Iron Deficiency Anaemia

## Who is this information for?

This information is for patients who may need an intravenous (IV) Ferinject iron infusion treatment.

## What is iron?

Iron is an essential nutrient for your body. It is an important part of haemoglobin (Hb), the red pigment which gives blood its colour and which carries oxygen around your body.

## What does intravenous (IV) infusion mean?

Intravenous (IV) means giving something directly into the blood stream of the body through a vein. A needle, placed into a vein in your hand or arm, is attached to a drip that contains iron. This fluid is slowly infused (dripped) into the vein and mixes with the blood in your body. This is called an infusion.

## Why do I need an iron infusion?

Your blood results have shown that the amount of iron you have in your blood is low. You need iron so your body can make new haemoglobin and red blood cells to carry the oxygen your body requires. An iron infusion will increase your iron levels more rapidly than iron tablets or liquid.

## What are the likely benefits of an iron infusion?

Your blood iron level will increase and this may result in your haemoglobin increasing as well. You may notice that you are less tired, have more energy, better concentration and become less breathless when taking exercise.

## You should not receive intravenous iron if:

- You are known to be sensitive (allergic) to any iron preparations intended for intramuscular or intravenous administration.
- You are known to have damage to your liver.
- You have any acute or chronic infections.
- You have **severe** asthma.
- You are less than 12 weeks pregnant.

## How will the intravenous iron be administered?

- Your doctor will determine the appropriate dose of iron.
- A small needle will be placed in a vein in your hand or arm. The iron will be given through a pump, which takes approximately 15 minutes.
- After the iron has been given, you will stay on the unit for half an hour so that the nurses can check you do not have any side effects.
- If you feel well, you will be allowed to go home immediately.

## **Are there any side effects or risks with a Ferinject iron infusion?**

There are some potential side effects to having an iron infusion. The most common is a metallic taste in your mouth. This normally disappears within 15 minutes of you having the infusion. You might feel lightheaded, sick or dizzy. If you have these symptoms, please tell a member of staff.

Other effects that you may notice following treatment of iron include: lowering of blood pressure, tingling or numbness of the limbs, abdominal discomfort, fever, rashes or skin flushing, swelling of the hands and feet.

Rarely, the iron infusion can cause discolouration of the skin around the infusion site. This is due to the iron solution leaking into the skin. It can cause permanent staining of the skin. If you feel any discomfort at the time of the infusion, please report it immediately to your nurse or doctor

Tell your doctor if you develop worsening of tiredness, muscle or bone pain (pain in your arms or legs, joints or back). That may be a sign of a decrease in blood phosphorus which might cause your bones to become soft (osteomalacia). This condition may sometimes lead to bone fractures. Your doctor may also check the levels of phosphate in your blood, especially if you need a number of treatments with iron over time.

Anaphylactic like reactions are very rare (fewer than 1 in 1000 patients). Symptoms may include: paleness, swollen lips, itchiness, weakness, sweating, dizziness, feeling of tightness in the chest, chest pain, fast pulse, difficulty in breathing.

If this happens after you have left the unit, please go to your nearest Emergency Department or your GP and tell them that you have had an iron injection. This may be an allergic reaction to the iron and you will be given antihistamine medication.

## **Who can I contact with queries or concerns?**

Pharmacy Medicine Information Helpline from 1pm to 5pm on **01923 436237**