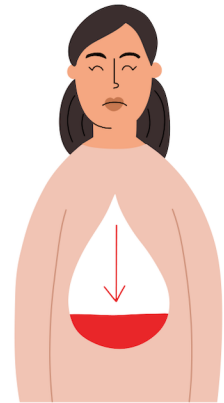


Anaemia: Intravenous Iron infusion

What is Iron and why is it important?

Iron is an important part of haemoglobin, the substance in red blood cells that transports oxygen throughout your body.

If you do not have enough iron, your body is unable to make enough healthy oxygen-carrying red blood cells. This lack of haemoglobin is called iron deficiency anaemia.



Iron deficiency anaemia can lead to breathlessness and fatigue, it can affect everything from brain function to your immune system's ability to fight infections.

What are the Causes of Iron Deficiency Anaemia?

Iron deficiency anaemia is common in patients who require major surgery as there may be blood loss during such surgeries.

The presence of anaemia is associated with an increased likelihood of receiving peri-operative blood transfusion, worsened outcomes following surgery, more complications, delayed recovery and greater length of hospital stay.



Why do you need IV iron?

IV iron, when given before major surgery, may improve your haemoglobin level by the time of surgery. This reduces the need for blood transfusion and improves outcomes.

Depending on the severity of your anaemia and your weight, you may require one or two doses of IV iron.

Alternatively, you may take iron tablets orally. This takes a longer time to improve your haemoglobin level and is ineffective in some patients whose absorption is low. Talk to your doctor if you wish to explore this option.

What are the side effects of IV Iron?

Generally, side effects are uncommon and if they do occur, they are usually mild and resolves itself without treatment.

- Temporary changes in taste (eg. Metallic taste)
- Headache
- Nausea/vomiting
- Muscle/joint pain
- Flushing
- Changes to blood pressure or pulse
- Skin rash/reaction at injection site
- Skin discolouration may occur due to leakage of iron into the tissues around the drip site. This may be long-lasting but is uncommon.



Things to consider:

While rare, some people may experience a serious allergic reaction. This can cause swelling of face, mouth and tongue and may potentially cause difficulty in breathing. As such, you will be closely monitored while IV iron is given, and for 30 minutes after.

Sometimes, the side effects such as headache, muscle/joint pains may start 1-2 days after the infusion has been given. Mostly they will settle down without treatment. If you are worried, do seek medical advice.

What to expect on the day of the Iron Infusion?

- You do not need to fast for the IV iron infusion.
- You may have breakfast or lunch as per normal.
- Take all your regular medications.
- The nurse will insert a small IV cannula in your hand or arm, through which the iron is given.
- You will be monitored during the infusion, and for 30 min after the infusion has completed. The whole process will take approximately 1 to 1.5 hours.
- You can drive home after the infusion (unless there is an unexpected reaction) and resume normal activities.

Contributed by Nursing

This brochure is produced for educational purposes and should not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. Please seek the advice of a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health or medical condition.

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