

# Receiving an Iron Infusion



Obstetrics & Gynaecology Department

## Introduction

You have been given this booklet as you are anaemic with low iron levels in your body. Your doctor has suggested you receive an iron infusion which is a special type of iron preparation given through a drip. This is given instead of iron tablets.

If you are taking iron tablets, please do not take them on the day of your infusion.

## Reasons for giving an iron infusion

- ✓ Before having surgery
- ✓ You are anaemic and have not responded to oral iron or the iron tablets have made you unwell.

An iron infusion is used instead of blood unless there is an urgent need for blood.

Iron infusions are not blood products and do not have the risks associated with blood transfusions.

## Suitability for and iron infusion

You should not have iron infusion if you:

- are currently taking antibiotics.
- have anaemia caused by deficiencies other than iron (such as B12 deficiency).
- have been told by a doctor that you have “iron overload”.
- have had an allergic reaction to iron given to you in a drip in the past.
- have had a serious problem with your liver.

## Safety of an iron infusion

You should not have an iron infusion during the first trimester of pregnancy. In the second and third trimesters it will be reviewed on an individual basis.

Uncommonly, it can cause problems with allergic reactions. The most serious allergic reaction is anaphylaxis, but this is rare. You will be monitored closely during and after the infusion.

### Side effects of iron infusion

As with the medicines, iron infusion can cause common side effects. Common side effects (in less than 1 in every 100 cases) include:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Flu like symptoms
- High or low blood pressure
- Nausea
- Injection site reactions – staining of the skin may occur as a result of the infusion. We shall discuss with you during the admission process.

Uncommon side effects (in less than 1 in every 1000 cases) include:

- Tummy upsets (vomiting, tummy pain, diarrhoea, constipation)
- Flushing, fast heart rate, low blood pressure
- Muscle and joint pains, back ache and muscle cramps
- Tiredness, chills, chest pain, swelling, pins and needles, a temperature, itching and a rash.

### How are iron infusions given?

Iron infusions are usually given at Awali Hospital. Before starting the treatment, the nurse will ask you a few questions and checks your pulse, blood pressure and temperature.

A canula (small plastic tube) will be inserted, via a needle, into a vein in your arm. The cannula allows the iron infusion to be administered. Depending on the dose prescribed, it can take up to 45 minutes for the iron infusion to be given. Please let

the nurses know at the time if you feel unwell during the infusion.

The nurse will check your pulse, blood pressure and temperature after the infusion has finished. You will normally be able to go home after 30 minutes. Your pulse, blood pressure and temperature will be checked and the canula will be removed before you are discharged.

### What happens after the iron infusion?

Some patients feel a little tired and their urine will be a darker color the next day. The treatment does not affect your driving ability.

Most patients notice that the symptoms of having low iron levels such as tiredness, shortness of breath, and dizziness reduce within 2 weeks of having the infusion but it can take up to 4 weeks to feel the full benefit.

You may need to have a blood test after 2 to 4 weeks (1 month if you are a renal patient); this will be a consultant decision. Please make an appointment with your nurse if requested. Your nurse or hospital doctor may decide that you need a further iron infusion.

NOTE: You must not take oral iron tablets once you have had the iron infusion. Further discussion will be required with your GP or consultant before restarting iron tablets.



## Contact us:

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