



Iron infusion risks and side effects

Your blood test results show that the amount of iron you have in your blood is low. You need iron so that your body can make new haemoglobin and red blood cells to carry the oxygen your body requires.

Iron infusions are generally given without causing any problems. Nausea, the most frequently reported side effect, occurred in less than three out of every 100 patients (2.9%) during clinical studies. However, it is important that you are aware of and understand the risks and potential side effects of having an iron infusion.

How will the iron be administered?

You will receive the iron by intravenous infusion – via a drip and pump, which takes between 30 – 60 minutes, depending on the amount of iron administered. If you feel well after treatment, you will be able to go home immediately.

What are the likely benefits of intravenous iron?

You may notice that you are less tired, have more energy, better concentration and become less breathless when taking exercise. Safe to use in pregnancy (but not in first trimester).

Who should not have iron infusions (contraindications)

- Women in the first three months of pregnancy.
- Those with severe asthma, severe renal (kidney) or hepatic (liver) problems, eczema, atopy (hypersensitivity disorders), active rheumatoid arthritis, and those with infections.

What are the risks?

- Hypersensitivity and anaphylaxis (acute allergic reaction) can occur with parenteral iron infusion (those having an iron infusion via a feeding tube) although this is uncommon.
- Hypophosphataemia (low phosphorous level), new musculoskeletal symptoms such as weakness or bone pain, or worsening of tiredness – report these symptoms to your GP or hospital contact who can check for hypophosphataemia. This is more common with ferrinject.

What are the side effects?

- **Common** (1 in 10 to 1 in 100) – headache, dizziness, flushing, hypertension (high blood pressure), nausea, injection site reactions.
- **Uncommon** (1 in 100 to 1 in 1000) – abdominal pain, vomiting, cramps, dyspnoea (breathing difficulties), arthralgia (joint pain), numbness, itching, rash chest pain,

diarrhoea, dizziness, fatigue, hypotension (low blood pressure), myalgia (muscle pain).
Skin staining (brown discolouration) which can be long lasting or permanent.

- **Rare** (1 in 1,000 to 1 in 10,000) – angioedema (swelling under the skin), reduced level of consciousness (drowsy), anxiety, bronchospasm (narrowed airways).

Other important information

- Before you receive intravenous iron therapy, please stop taking any iron tablets the day before coming to your first appointment.
- After IV iron, stop taking any iron tablets for 5 days.

Important phone numbers:

Haematology patients: Battle Day Unit: 0118 322 6980 or 8723 or Haematology Clinical Admin Team (CAT 8): 0118 322 8145 or email rbh.CAT8@nhs.net

Maternity patients: Maternity Day Assessment Unit: 0118 322 8741

Surgical patients: Adult Surgical Assessment Unit: 0118 322 7622

Medical patients: Same Day Emergency Care: 0118 322 5220

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Please ask if you need this information in another language or format.

Approved by the RBFT Hospital Transfusion Committee

Reviewed by Habib Wardak, October 2024. Next review due: October 2026.

Patient consent for intravenous iron infusion

I acknowledge and understand that the proposed treatment of an intravenous iron infusion has been explained to me and is to be performed on me, the patient:

- **Benefits** – To treat iron deficiency anaemia.
- **Risks** – Intravenous iron can cause serious hypersensitivity reactions, which can be fatal. The risk of sensitivity is increased in patients with known allergies, immune or inflammatory conditions as well as patients with a history of severe asthma or eczema.
- **Side effects** as listed above.
- The **potential alternatives** to intravenous iron (blood transfusion or oral iron therapy) have been offered (if appropriate) and explained to me.
- I have been given a copy of the patient information leaflet about intravenous iron.
- I have been given the opportunity to ask questions about the treatment.
- I understand I can withdraw my consent at any time.

Patient signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Patient name: _____