



**University
Hospitals Sussex**
NHS Foundation Trust

Intravenous (IV) iron

Haematology

Patient information

What is this information about?

This information is about treatment with intravenous (IV) iron.

It explains:

- What IV iron treatment is and why you may need it.
- How the IV iron will be given to you.
- How long it may take to give you your IV iron.
- Things that you should tell your doctor about before you have IV iron so they can decide if it is suitable and safe for you.
- Possible side effects of IV iron treatment and what to do if you get them.

Why have I been given this information?

You have been given this information because your doctor, or another healthcare professional, thinks that IV iron would be a good treatment to raise the levels of iron in your body to the levels which your body needs. They have sent you (referred you) to have IV iron treatment.

Reading this information will help you know what to expect from your treatment and help to make sure that is safe and works as well as possible.

Why is it important for me to have enough iron in my body?

Iron is important because it helps your body to make haemoglobin. Haemoglobin, or 'Hb', is the protein found in red blood cells. It carries oxygen around your body to where it is needed and gives blood its red colour.

What is intravenous iron (IV iron) treatment?

IV iron treatment is given to you directly into a vein (intravenously) through a small hollow needle. Fluid containing the iron (an iron infusion) flows from a bag. Giving fluid in this way is called giving it by 'drip'.

IV iron is used to treat iron deficiency (when you do not have enough iron in your body) by boosting the iron stored in your body. You may need IV iron treatment if:

- You have been given extra iron to take by mouth (for example as a tablet or liquid that you swallow) but it has not worked well.
- Extra iron to take by mouth is not right for you for some reason.

How long will my IV iron treatment take?

Each IV iron treatment (infusion) usually takes around 30 minutes. The exact amount of time depends on your body weight and how much iron you need.

You should allow around an hour for your appointment as after you have had your infusion you will need to stay for around another 30 minutes.

During this time a nurse will check that your body has not reacted to your infusion in a way that could harm you and that you are ok.

Which things that mean I should not have IV iron treatment must I tell my doctor about?

Do tell your doctor before they prescribe or give you IV if you think you:

- Are allergic (hypersensitive to anything) in the IV iron infusion.
- Have had serious allergic (hypersensitive) reactions to other IV treatments in the past.
- Have an iron overload (too much iron in your body).
- Have anaemia (not having enough haemoglobin in your blood) which is not caused by iron deficiency.

Might I have an allergic reaction to my IV iron treatment?

Yes. Even if you have had IV iron treatment before without having a reaction it is possible that you could have one after any new IV iron treatment. Around one in 100 to one in 250 people have a mild allergic reaction to IV iron.

Some people have a severe or even life-threatening allergic reaction to IV iron. This is known as an anaphylactic reaction and can cause problems with your heart and blood pressure. It could also cause you to faint or to lose consciousness.

Be aware

It is very rare for people to have a severe or life-threatening allergic reaction to IV iron.

Which things may make me more likely to have an allergic reaction to IV iron?

You may be more likely to have an allergic reaction if:

- You already have allergies that you know about. This includes allergies to medicines.
- You have ever had asthma, eczema or other allergies such as allergies to dust, pollen or pet dander (pet dandruff).
- You have an immune or inflammatory condition such as rheumatoid arthritis or lupus erythematosus.

Do tell your doctor if you have had any of these before they prescribe or give you IV iron. They will decide if IV iron treatment is right for you.

What must I do if I have any symptoms of an allergic reaction during my IV iron treatment or shortly after it?

Do tell your doctor or nurse straight away if you have symptoms of an allergic reaction such as:

- Hives or a rash.
- Feeling dizzy or light-headed.
- Your lips, tongue, throat or body swelling.
- Finding it difficult to breath, being short of breath or wheezing.

Your doctors and nurses are aware of the symptoms that could mean you are having an allergic reaction. They will check how you are when you are having your treatment and for 20 to 30 minutes afterwards to make sure you are ok.

What should I do if I think I have allergic symptoms caused by my IV treatment when I am at home?

Please contact your local ward or unit using the contact details below.

Outside of staffed hours, please use the [NHS 111](#) online service.

Who can I contact if I would like further information or support after I have read this information?

Please contact your local ward or unit:

Royal Sussex County Hospital, Brighton.
Haematology Day Unit, Sussex Kidney Unit,
Phone: **01273 696 955 Ext: 67413**

Staffed Monday to Friday 8am to 7pm.

St. Richard's Hospital, Chichester.
Fernhurst Unit.
Phone: **01243 788 122 Ext: 35154**

Staffed Monday to Friday 8am to 6.30pm.

Worthing Hospital
Amberley Unit
Phone: **01903 205 111 Ext. 85710**

Staffed Monday to Friday 8:00 am to 6:30 am

Balcombe Ward
Phone: **01903 202 111 Ext. 86550**

Staffed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

This information is intended for patients receiving care in Brighton & Hove and Chichester St.Richard's hospital.

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