

# Intravenous (IV) Iron Infusion

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This patient information is for patients having or considering an intravenous (IV) iron infusion. It should help you understand IV iron infusions and the potential benefits and risks.

## Why you may need an IV Iron infusion?

An IV iron infusion is a way to increase the body's iron levels quickly. It's a more immediate treatment than tablets or dietary changes. The body needs iron to make haemoglobin (Hb), a protein that is found in red blood cells. Haemoglobin carries oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body. Iron helps our muscles store and use oxygen. If your iron levels are low, you may feel tired and not able to carry out your normal routine. When the amount of iron in the body gets too low, the haemoglobin levels fall below normal. This is known as 'iron deficiency anaemia'.

An iron infusion is given directly into the vein via a cannula and is indicated for the treatment of iron deficiency:

- When oral iron preparations are ineffective or cannot be used or,
- Where there is a need to try to quickly increase the iron stores and haemoglobin in the body.

## Potential side effects

IV iron infusions are considered safe, but like all other medications, can have some side effects that include:

- Hypersensitivity reactions are uncommon (up to 1% of people) and anaphylaxis (allergic reaction) is rare (up to 0.1% of people, or 1 in 1000)
- Injection site reactions are considered common (up to 10% of people). These include redness, swelling, burning, pain, bruising, discolouration and/or irritation at the site of cannulation and infusion. It is also common to experience nausea
- Some patients may experience delayed reactions, which may be severe. They are characterised by joint pain, muscle pain and sometimes fever. The onset varies from several hours up to four days after administration. Symptoms usually last two to four days and settle spontaneously (almost without noticing) or following the use of simple pain killers such as paracetamol
- Rarely, permanent skin staining can occur from the IV iron infusion. **It is important that you report any discomfort during the infusion to the nurse**

## How long does an iron infusion take?

An iron infusion can take around 30 minutes to one hour to complete depending on the amount of iron administered. Intravenous iron is given by a registered nurse; you will be observed for any adverse effects whilst it is being given and for at least 30 minutes after it has stopped.

If an alternative form of iron to Ferinject or Monofer is given, the infusion may take longer and require you to stay for a few hours. It may be necessary for you to receive a second infusion in one week, depending on the amount of iron that you need.

## After discharge

If you are asked to continue taking an oral iron supplement after the IV iron infusion, it should not be started earlier than five days after the last iron infusion.

## Contact and further information

If you have any questions, please ask the healthcare team who will be happy to discuss this with you.

Same Day Emergency Care, Pilgrim Hospital  
Open 7 days a week, between 8am to 8pm  
Telephone: 01205 445609

Same Day Emergency Care, Lincoln Hospital  
Open 7 days a week, between 8am to 8pm  
Telephone: 01522 707085

Ambulatory Assessment Unit  
Open Monday to Friday 7 days a week, between 8.30am to 9pm  
Telephone: 01476 464888

Outside of these times, please call your GP or 111 for advice. If you believe that you need an emergency response, please call 999 or attend the Emergency Department.

Department: Same Day Emergency Care

Site: Pilgrim, Lincoln and Grantham

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