




HEALTH

AT DULWICH

Iron Infusions Ferrinject



**Information for Patients,
Family and Carers**

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Iron Infusion

Your doctor has recommended that you be administered an iron infusion. This is usually because your body is depleted from iron and can not either absorb this through taking tablets, or there may be another reason. This may result in anaemia if left untreated.

The procedure usually takes 60 minutes. An IV cannula will be placed in either an elbow or wrist vein. The iron solution is then administered over 15 minutes. Your doctor and nurse will monitor your temperature, pulse and blood pressure for an hour.

You should be able to return to work and gentle activities following the procedure. If requested, a medical certificate can be supplied.

Most patients tolerate the procedure well and report no problems during or afterwards. If side effects do occur, they are mostly mild and will resolve without any treatment.

The most common side effects are temporary and include:

- Headache, feeling sick or vomiting, muscle or joint pain
- Changes in taste (eg. metallic)
- Changes to blood pressure or pulse

Skin staining (brown discoloration) may occur due to leakage of iron into the tissues around the needle (drip) site. This is not common but the stain can be permanent.

Inform the doctor or nurse straight away of any discomfort, burning, redness or swelling at the needle (drip) site.

Although very uncommon, some people may have a serious allergic reaction. In rare cases this can be life threatening. You will be closely monitored while IV iron is given, and for 45 minutes after.

Sometimes side effects (eg. headache, muscle or joint pain) can start 1 or 2 days later. Mostly they will settle down by themselves over the next couple of days. If they worry you or interfere with your daily activities, contact your doctor.

If you have chest pain, trouble breathing, dizziness or neck/mouth swelling, please seek urgent medical attention/call an ambulance (000).

There is an uncommon side effect of muscle and/or bone pain, and fatigue, usually in older patients with renal problems or severe Vitamin D deficiency. This may last a few weeks. Discuss this with your doctor if there are any concerns.

A repeat blood test to see if you need another iron infusion is usually performed 6 weeks later. Most patients do not need another treatment for some time.

What to tell your Doctor

You need to tell you doctor if you:

- Are pregnant/trying to get pregnant. IV iron should be avoided in the first trimester.
- Have a history of asthma, eczema or other allergies.
- Have had a reaction to any type of iron injection or infusion in the past
- Have a history of high iron levels, haemochromatosis or liver problems
- Are on any medications (including herbal and over the counter medicines).
- Have (or may have) an infection at the moment.

You may wish to discuss with your doctor about the following:

- Why do I need IV iron?
- What are the other options?
- How many iron infusions will I need?
- If you are taking iron tablets at the moment: When do I stop taking iron tablets and will I need to use them again?
- How long will it take for the iron to work?
- Any questions about any side effects.

Cost of the Procedure

On the day of the infusion you will be required to pay for the consultation and the procedure fee. You will receive an immediate rebate from Medicare for the cost of the consultation. However, Medicare does not subsidise the cost of equipment or the time needed by the doctor and the nurse to ensure your wellbeing. At Health at Dulwich we try to minimize costs we pass onto our patients.

Out-of-Pocket Cost

Non-pensioner: \$ 213.65

Pensioner or Concession Card holder: \$ 176.15

This payment is to be made on the day of the procedure. Please do not hesitate to discuss with reception staff or your doctor any queries.

At time of printing (January 2020), the major medical benefit funds **do not** subsidise this procedure. However, check with your health fund.

Further Resources

- Iron Infusion—FCM Fact Sheet—Melbourne Haematology
- SA Health fact sheet: Intravenous (IV iron infusions Consumer information