



Patient & Family Guide
2018

IV (Intravenous) Iron Therapy



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Why do I need IV iron therapy?

Iron is a mineral that the body needs to make red blood cells. When the body does not get enough iron, it can't make enough red blood cells to keep you healthy. This is called iron deficiency or iron deficiency anemia.

Not having enough iron may cause:

- › tiredness
- › shortness of breath
- › trouble doing your usual activities
- › trouble learning
- › a higher chance of getting an infection

How is iron deficiency treated?

Iron deficiency is treated by taking iron. Iron can be given in an oral (taken by mouth) form such as a tablet. If this is not possible, iron can be given by injection into a vein. This is called the IV (intravenous) method.

The IV method is used before and after surgery when:

- You are not able to take iron by mouth.
- You are not responding to the iron given by mouth.
- You are a patient in the Perioperative Blood Management (PBM) Service and need your blood supply built up quickly before surgery.

How is IV iron therapy given?

1. IV iron therapy is given before surgery in the Ambulatory Care Clinic. A doctor will monitor your therapy.
2. You do not need to do anything special to get ready for the treatment.
3. IV iron therapy may take 2½ to 4 hours. A nurse will check your blood pressure and pulse often during this time. You may need to have IV iron therapy more than once.
4. **Do not take any medicines that have iron in them after getting IV iron therapy.**
5. Keep eating foods that have high levels of iron (like beef liver, clams, and cereal with added iron) to help with your treatment. Try to eat around 18 milligrams of iron each day.

What are the possible side effects?

IV iron therapy may cause:

- › low blood pressure
- › headache
- › cramping (usually in the legs)
- › upset stomach
- › vomiting (throwing up)
- › constipation (not being able to poop)
- › diarrhea

These problems are not usually severe (very bad) and may go away without treatment.

You may have soreness or an infection where the IV needle entered your skin and vein. If you are worried about your symptoms, call your family health care provider.

Rarely, some people may have trouble breathing or have a severe allergic reaction. If this happens, call 911 or go to the nearest Emergency Department (ED) right away.

****After your ED visit, make sure to:**

If you are a patient in the PBM Service:

- › call 902-473-3117

If you are NOT a patient in the PBM Service:

- › call your specialist or family health care provider

Do not take this medicine if your family health care provider has said that you have any of the following health problems:

- › your blood pressure is very low
- › you are allergic to iron
- › you have had a reaction to an iron injection or infusion in the past
- › your body is not able to use iron the way it should, causing you to have too much iron in your body
- › your red blood cells are being destroyed, causing you to have too much iron in your body

Please talk to your family health care provider about any questions you have about your treatment.

Do I need to have any blood work done after IV iron therapy?

You will need to have blood work done 5–7 days after your therapy, and again 21 days after your therapy. Your family health care provider will give you the paperwork you need.

Who do I call if I have any problems or questions?

If you have any of the side effects listed on page 3, or you have any new symptoms that you're not sure about:

If you are a patient in the PBM Service:

- › call 902-473-3117

If you are NOT a patient in the PBM Service:

- › call your specialist's office or family health care provider who ordered your therapy.

What are your questions?

Please ask. We are here to help you.

