



Patient & Family Guide
2019

IV (Intravenous) Iron Dextran Therapy



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Why is iron important?

Iron is a mineral that your body needs to make hemoglobin in red blood cells. Red blood cells need hemoglobin to carry oxygen. If your body does not get enough iron, it can't make enough red blood cells to keep you healthy. This is called iron deficiency (iron shortage) or iron deficiency anemia.

Iron deficiency may make you:

- › feel more tired than usual
- › feel short of breath
- › have a fast heartbeat
- › have pale skin, gums, and fingernail beds
- › have a sore tongue
- › be less able to do your usual activities
- › be less able to learn things
- › increase your chance of getting an infection

You are getting iron dextran to treat your iron deficiency.

Iron dextran is given by IV (intravenous) before and after surgery when:

- You are not able to take this medicine by mouth. You will be given the medicine through a vein in your arm.

- You are a patient of the Blood Management Service and need your blood levels built up quickly so that they are high enough for surgery.

How will I get this medicine?

Before surgery

You will get iron dextran through an IV in your arm before your surgery. This will be done in the Ambulatory Clinic by a registered nurse with a doctor's supervision.

After surgery

- You will get iron dextran through an IV after surgery on the nursing unit and/or in the Intensive Care Unit with a doctor's supervision.
- It can take up to 5 hours to get the full dose of this medicine.
- You will be monitored carefully in case you have a reaction to the medicine.
- Do not take any medicines that contain iron after getting IV iron dextran therapy until you are told it's OK by your family health care provider.
- Keep eating foods rich in iron. Try to eat 18 mg of iron each day.

Iron-rich foods	Iron
Shreddies® cereal, 1 cup	7 mg
Liver (chicken, turkey, lamb), cooked, 2.5 oz	6.2 mg
Beef liver, cooked, 2.5 oz	4.9 mg
Instant oatmeal, cooked, ½ cup	3.8 mg
Cheerios™ cereal, 1 cup	4.2 mg
Spinach, cooked, ½ cup	3.4 mg
Beans (white, black, kidney), cooked, ¾ cup	3 mg
Beef, cooked, 3 oz	2.5 mg
Sunflower seeds, ¼ cup	2.5 mg
Clams, 2.5 oz	2 mg
Eggs, 2 large	1.8 mg
Chicken or turkey, cooked, 3 oz	1.5 mg
Fish, cooked, 2.5 oz	1.4 mg
Hummus, ¼ cup	1.4 mg
Enriched pasta, cooked, ½ cup	1.3 mg
Canned tuna, light, 2.5 oz	1.2 mg

Read food labels carefully to check the amount of iron in your foods.

What are the possible side effects of IV iron dextran therapy?

- Serious allergic reactions are rare but can happen. You will be closely monitored during the time that a reaction is most likely to happen. Be sure to tell your nurse right away if you have any of the following:
 - › shortness of breath/trouble breathing
 - › dizziness
 - › swelling of the tongue
 - › flushing (sudden feeling of heat)
 - › feeling unwell
- Less serious reactions that may happen after you go home (about 24-48 hours after getting the medicine) include:
 - › fever over 38° C/100.4° F
 - › muscle and joint aches/pain
 - › sweating and chills
 - › rash, hives
 - › fast heartbeat
 - › blood clot in the leg
 - › low blood pressure
 - › soreness or infection at the IV site

Most of these symptoms should go away on their own in 3 or 4 days. If you think you may have a blood clot in your leg, or you have other symptoms that are getting worse, call your family health care provider or go to the nearest Emergency Department right away.

Talk with your family health care provider before you take IV iron dextran. Be sure to tell them if you have any of the following health problems:

- › very low blood pressure
- › your body is not able to use iron the way it should, causing a buildup of iron
- › your red blood cells are being destroyed, causing a buildup of iron
- › asthma, serious liver problems, infectious kidney disease, heart disease, or rheumatoid arthritis

What do I need to do after having IV iron dextran therapy?

- You will need to have blood work done after having IV iron dextran therapy. You will need to have your blood drawn 5-7 days after treatment, and again 21 days after treatment.
- Your family health care provider will give you the requisition (paperwork) you will need for your blood work.

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

- If you are a patient of the Blood Management Service and you have had IV iron dextran therapy, call the Blood Management Service at 902-473-3117 if you notice any side effects or if you develop any new symptoms.
- If you have had IV iron dextran therapy from another service, please contact their office.

**What are your questions? Please ask.
We are here to help you.**

**In Nova Scotia you can call 811 to talk with
a registered nurse about your health care
questions 24/7.**

