



Patient & Family Guide
2017

Oral Irons and Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)



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Oral Irons and Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

What are oral irons?

- Oral irons are a group of medicines that includes ferrous sulfate, ferrous gluconate, ferrous fumarate, Proferrin[®] and FeraMAX[®] 150.
- Oral irons are available under many brand names and in several forms.

Type of oral iron	Form
ferrous sulfate	tablet or liquid
ferrous gluconate	tablet
ferrous fumarate	tablet, capsule or liquid
heme iron polypeptide (Proferrin [®])	tablet
polysaccharide-iron complex (FeraMAX [®] 150)	capsule

Why does someone with CKD need this medicine?

- Iron is needed by your red blood cells to help carry oxygen through your body.
- When your body does not get enough oxygen due to lack of iron, you may feel tired and have shortness of breath.
- Many people with CKD have anemia (not enough red blood cells or hemoglobin in the blood). Your kidneys make a hormone called erythropoietin (EPO). EPO tells your body to make red blood cells.
- When you have CKD, you may not make enough EPO. This causes your red blood cell count to drop and anemia to develop. Some people with CKD need a medicine called erythropoiesis-stimulating agent (ESA) to do the work of EPO.
- For ESA to work its best, you will need enough iron.
- Taking oral irons will give you enough iron to make the oxygen-carrying part of your red blood cells. This will make sure your body gets enough oxygen.

How do I take oral irons?

Type of oral iron	Instructions
ferrous sulfate	Swallow whole.
ferrous gluconate	DO NOT crush, chew, dissolve or break.
ferrous fumarate	
heme iron polypeptide (Proferrin®)	
polysaccharide-iron complex (FeraMAX® 150)	Open the capsule and mix with water.

- Take 2 hours before a meal **OR** 1 hour after a meal.
- Take at least 1 hour apart from any stomach medications (e.g., antacids).
- Take at the same time every day.
- Take with food **IF** your stomach feels upset.
- Do not miss doses. If you forget a dose, skip it. Do not take a double dose.

What are your questions?

Please ask. We are here to help you.

Are there any side effects?

The most common side effects are:

- › nausea (upset stomach)
- › vomiting (throwing up)
- › constipation (hard to poop)
- › indigestion (heartburn)
- › diarrhea (loose stools)
- › black stools

How should I store this medicine?

- Store it at room temperature and away from damp areas like the bathroom.
- Store it out of children's reach.

This pamphlet is just a guide. Please talk to your health care provider about your questions. We are here to help you.

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For more information, go to <http://library.novascotia.ca>

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The information is not intended to be and does not constitute health care or medical advice.

If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

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The information in this pamphlet is to be updated every 3 years or as needed.