

# Injectable Iron and Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)

# **Injectable Iron and Chronic Kidney Disease (CKD)**

## **What is injectable iron?**

- Injectable forms of iron help your body make hemoglobin. Hemoglobin is found in your red blood cells. When there is not enough iron, red blood cells do not have enough hemoglobin to carry oxygen throughout your body.
- If your body is not getting enough oxygen due to lack of iron, you may feel tired or short of breath. This is called iron deficiency anemia.
- There are several types of injectable iron available.

## **Why does someone with CKD need injectable iron?**

- Many people with CKD, or who are on dialysis, have anemia because their red blood cells are low. The body needs iron to help make new red blood cells.
- Some people with CKD may need to take medication called erythropoiesis-stimulating agent (ESA). If you need ESA, you will need enough iron in your body for this medication to work best.

- Getting iron injections can help make sure that you have enough iron in your body to make hemoglobin.

### **How do I take this medication?**

- This medication is given through an I.V. injected into a vein in your arm or hand. A member of your kidney care team will set up the injection.
- You will need to stay for 30 minutes after each I.V. dose of iron. This is so that staff can check for any reaction to the medication.
- If you are doing your own dialysis at home, and are injecting your own I.V. iron, we will show you the steps to take.
- We will also show you the steps to give yourself an EpiPen® injection. You may need this medication in the rare case that a severe (very bad) allergic reaction (anaphylactic shock) happens.

### **Are there any side effects?**

The most common side effects are:

- |   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| › Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) | › Rash                            |
| › Vomiting (throwing up)                | › Itchiness at the injection site |
| › Muscle cramps                         | › Low blood pressure              |

Rare, but serious, side effects include:

- › Anaphylaxis (severe allergic reaction)
- › Shortness of breath

## **How do I store this medication?**

- If you are doing your own dialysis at home, store your I.V. iron between 15 to 25 °C (59 to 77 °F).
- Store it out of reach of children and pets.

This pamphlet is for educational purposes only. It is not intended to replace the advice or professional judgment of a health care provider. The information may not apply to all situations. If you have any questions, please ask your health care provider.

Find this pamphlet and all our patient resources here:  
<https://library.nshealth.ca/Patients-Guides>

Connect with a registered nurse in Nova Scotia any time:  
Call 811 or visit: <https://811.novascotia.ca>

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