

# INTRAVENOUS (IV) IRON INFUSION

## INFORMATION FOR PATIENTS

### What is iron?

Iron is an essential mineral in the body. It is required for the proper function of hemoglobin, a protein in red blood cells that transports oxygen around the body. Without enough iron and hemoglobin, your body cannot get enough oxygen which can result in many symptoms. This condition is known as iron deficiency anemia.

### What is IV iron?

Intravenous (IV) iron infusion is a way of rapidly getting iron into your bloodstream via a small tube that is placed into a vein in your arm.

### Are there side effects with using IV iron?

Most patients tolerate IV iron well. Generally, the risks of IV iron are minimal. Side effects, if they occur, can start 1-2 days after the infusion. Most are mild, do not require treatment, and resolve on their own. Serious allergic reactions are rare.

#### Common side effects

- Headaches
- Muscle or joint pain
- Feeling sick or vomiting
- Changes in taste (e.g. metallic)
- Changes in blood pressure or pulse
- Irritation at site of injection

### Who should get IV iron?

IV iron is used as a treatment option for iron deficiency. Your doctor may suggest IV iron if you: experience side effects from oral iron tablets, have difficulty absorbing oral iron, have severe anemia, have an upcoming surgery, or (in pregnancy) are close to giving birth.

Notify your doctor and the infusion centre if you:

- Are in the first trimester of pregnancy
- Have had a reaction to any type of iron injection/infusion in the past
- Are on medications they may not be aware of
- Have liver disease or abnormal liver function test results, or
- Have any new or ongoing infections.

### Will I need to pay for my IV iron?

- Yes, you will need to pay for your IV iron.
- However, many insurance providers will subsidize/cover the cost (this will depend on your individual plan).
- If you qualify for the Trillium Drug Program, Venofer® or Monoferric® may be on the list of covered medications. Talk to your doctor to see if you qualify.

### How do I get my supply of IV iron?

Visit a local pharmacy with your IV iron prescription. Your doctor may order more than one infusion, depending on your iron needs.

### What should I expect at the IV infusion appointment?

You do not need to do anything to prepare for the day of iron infusion (e.g. no fasting needed). Simply bring your IV iron with you to the hospital (or other infusion centre) where an IV will be started and the infusion process will begin. You do not need to take your oral iron pills on the day of the IV infusion, but it will not be harmful if you do.

If you receive Venofer®, the infusion process will take around 2-3 hours.

If you receive Monoferric®, the infusion process will take around 1-2 hours.

Following the completion of the infusion, you will be asked to stay for a brief period (30 minutes) to monitor for any reactions. In the absence of an unexpected reaction, you will be able to drive home and resume all normal activities. You can stop oral iron for a few weeks following your IV infusion.

You have been recommended IV iron by your doctor. A prescription will be given to you or faxed to your pharmacy.



Schedule an IV infusion appointment at the hospital or local infusion centre (your doctor's office may do this for you).



Pick up your IV iron from the pharmacy.



Bring your IV iron with you to the appointment. The infusion process will take between 1-3 hours.



Monitor for symptoms.