

## **What is Iron?**

Iron is a metallic element that is required for oxygen transportation in the blood and regulation of cell growth.

Rich sources of dietary iron include red meat, lentils, beans, poultry, fish, green leafy vegetables, tofu, chickpeas, black-eyed peas, fortified bread, and fortified breakfast cereals.

Iron deficiency is when you do not have enough iron in your body. A deficiency of iron limits oxygen delivery to cells which may lead to: fatigue, shortness of breath, decreased physical performance, poor work performance and decreased immunity.

## **Why give Intravenous Iron?**

Iron supplements are indicated in the prevention and treatment of iron deficiency anaemia, which may result from inadequate diet, malabsorption, pregnancy and /or blood loss.

Intravenous Iron Infusion are recommended for persons where iron tablets have been deemed unsuitable and the person needs to have iron infused via the vein (intravenous).

## **What is Intravenous Iron?**

The active ingredient is iron sucrose. It is a dark brown, non-transparent, aqueous solution. It comes in glass ampoules of 5ml which corresponds to 100mg of iron. The other ingredients are water for injection and sodium hydroxide.

## **How will I receive Intravenous Iron?**

Your doctor will decide how much Iron to give you. He or she will also decide how often you need Iron and for how long. A venous cannula (slender tube) is inserted into a vein in your arm for the administration of intravenous iron.

### **First Infusion**

A test dose is administered to ensure that this treatment is suitable for you. A small amount of the drug 25mgs is infused over 15 minutes, if suitable the remainder 175mgs is infused over 60minutes.

**Second Infusion** 200mgs of iron sucrose is infused over 60 minutes.

### **Before Intravenous Iron administration**

Please inform your nurse of the following:

- Any known reaction to iron or any other medication
- Pregnancy – You must not receive iron in the first three months of pregnancy
- Any significant medical problems

### **What are the possible side effects?**

Like all medications, Intravenous iron can cause side effects, although not everybody gets them.

## **Allergic reactions**

Affects less than 1 in 1,000 people Tell your doctor or nurse straight away if you think you are having an allergic reaction.

The signs may include:

- Feeling dizzy, light-headed or faint (low blood pressure)
- Swelling of your face
- Difficulty breathing

## **Common side effect**

Affects less than 1 in 10 people

- Changes in your taste such as a metallic taste, this does not usually last long.

## **Uncommon side effects**

Affects less than 1 in 100 people

- Fast pulse rate
- Headache or feeling dizzy
- Low blood pressure and collapse
- Pounding heart beat (palpitations)
- Stomach pain or diarrhoea
- Feeling sick (nausea) or being sick (vomiting)
- Wheezing
- Itching, hives, rash or skin redness
- Muscle cramps or pain
- Flushing

