

POTENTIAL RISK OF HAVING IRON INFUSION

An iron infusion is considered safe in pregnancy and is not known to cause any problems for a baby. It can be given any time after the first 3 months of pregnancy. Most people have no side effects from an iron infusion. However, about **5%** of people have **minor** side effects that last for a few hours or days and then settle down; and **fewer than 1%** have **serious** side effects.

MINOR SIDE EFFECTS INCLUDE:

- headache, mild dizziness, flushing, mild fever;
- nausea, diarrhoea or constipation, abdominal pain;
- muscle aches and pains;
- mild itchiness;
- discomfort at injection site; and/or
- temporary change in taste (metallic).

Generally, these will come on during the infusion. However, occasionally they won't occur until 1 – 2 days later. If **minor side effects** develop, please contact the **DAY ASSESSMENT UNIT** during business hours on **8890-6150** and the **BIRTH UNIT** after hours on **8890-7395** and let our staff know.

A very small number of people (1% or fewer) may have **serious side effects**:

- **Shortness of breath**
- **Neck or face swelling**
- **Severe dizziness**
- **Chest or back pain**
- **Development of hives**

These will generally occur during the infusion, but can rarely also occur after discharge.

If you have any of these serious side effects, you **MUST SEEK URGENT MEDICAL ATTENTION OR CALL AN AMBULANCE (000)**

Your midwife is aware of possible side effects and you will be monitored closely.

Always tell your midwife or doctor if you are worried that your baby is moving less than what you are used to.

YOUR FOLLOW-UP

You need to have a **blood test**

✓ **in 4 weeks** (it takes this long to see the best increase in haemoglobin - so the first blood test is usually at 4 weeks)

✓ **Other time** _____

You should attend for your **next pregnancy visit** at the time advised by your usual pregnancy team

A free and confidential interpreter service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. If required, please ask staff to arrange an interpreter for you. AUSLAN and telephone interpreters are available.

Carers provide care and unpaid assistance to others. They may be family members, friends or neighbours. Please notify staff if you have a carer.

We care about your health. That's why all of our health facilities and grounds are 100% smoke free. Fines apply. For free support, contact the Quitline on 137848 or navigate to www.icanquit.com.au

We welcome your feedback on this brochure as a way of continually improving our service. Please send your feedback to WSLHD-Get_Involved@health.nsw.gov.au

Ferinject_Patient Brochure July 2017

IRON INFUSION

PATIENT INFORMATION

Due to your iron stores being low, your doctor has arranged for you to have an iron infusion.

You have been booked into the Day Assessment Unit at Westmead Hospital

on _____
at _____

The Day Assessment Unit is located in the Women's Health Clinic and can be contacted on **8890-6150**



WHY YOU NEED IRON

Iron is necessary for the body to make haemoglobin (Hb). Haemoglobin is very important, as it carries oxygen from the lungs to the rest of the body. When the amount of iron in the body gets too low, the haemoglobin level falls below normal. If your haemoglobin is low because of low iron, this may make you feel tired and not able to carry out your normal activities.

This is known as **iron deficiency anaemia**.

The most common and safest way to treat iron deficiency anaemia is to take iron by mouth as a tablet or liquid. This works well for most people and is usually tried first. However, occasionally iron needs to be given intravenously (IV).



I.V. IRON MIGHT BE NEEDED IF YOU ARE:

- ◆ unable to tolerate iron taken by mouth
- ◆ unable to absorb iron through your gut
- ◆ unable to absorb enough iron due to the amount of blood your body is losing
- ◆ needing to increase your iron levels quickly to avoid complications or a blood transfusion
- ◆ very anaemic, haemoglobin below 70 g/L

FERINJECT

Ferinject is a special kind of iron that is used for the treatment of patients with iron deficiency, **when oral iron preparations are not effective** or cannot be used.



IRON GIVEN BY DRIP INTO A VEIN

'Intravenous' or 'IV' means giving something directly into the blood stream of the body through a vein. A needle placed into a vein (usually in the back of the hand or arm) is attached to a drip that contains iron mixed with saline (a sterile salt water solution). This brown fluid is slowly 'dripped' (infused) into the vein and mixes with the blood in your body.

BEFORE YOU HAVE THE IV INFUSION

Tell your doctor & midwife if you:

- ✓ have a history of asthma, eczema or other allergies
- ✓ have had a reaction to any type of iron injection or infusion in the past
- ✓ have a history of high iron levels, haemochromatosis or liver problems
- ✓ are on any medications (including over the counter or herbal supplements)
- ✓ currently have (or may have) an infection

DAY OF THE INFUSION

You do not need to fast for an iron infusion.

- ▶ You can take all of your regular medications.
- ▶ The doctor/midwife will put a small IV drip in your arm/hand through which iron is given.

If you experience any side effects during the infusion, let our staff know immediately

- ▶ Unless there is an unexpected reaction (which is rare), you can drive home after the infusion and do your usual activities.

Iron tablets should be stopped for a week after an iron infusion because the iron in them will not be absorbed by your body.

AFTER THE IRON INFUSION

After the infusion you will generally feel completely well and be able to do everything you usually do. If you have any **concerns or possible side effects** after you go home and in the next few days, please let us know.

Phone the Day Assessment Unit on **8890-6150** between 8am and 8 pm, or

the Birth Unit at other times on **8890-7395**.

Our staff may sometimes also phone you to see how you are getting on.