

PATIENT INFORMATION

Intravenous (IV) Iron Infusion

Why do I need an Iron Transfusion?

As part of the work-up for your elective surgery, one of your blood tests taken by the doctors or nurses has shown you to have low iron levels in your blood. This is called iron deficiency anaemia and is treated with iron supplementation. It is important to optimise the amount of iron in your blood, as iron is needed to make the red blood cells responsible for carrying oxygen in your blood. IV iron infusions are used when oral iron tablets have not worked; given you side effects or the time interval until your surgery date is not long enough to allow the iron tablets to work.

What are Benefits of IV Iron?

It will decrease your chance of needing a blood transfusion during or after your operation as well as reducing the risk of other post-operative complications.

What are the Side Effects of IV Iron?

Side effects are uncommon and mostly mild but it is important to report any concerns you may have during or immediately after the infusion to the nurse looking after you. Symptoms you could experience include a metallic taste in your mouth, numbness of the lips, fever, rash, skin flushing, abdominal discomfort, swelling of the hands and feet, muscular aches and pains and rarely a severe allergic reaction (anaphylaxis - swollen lips, itchiness, weakness, sweating, tight feeling chest, chest pain, fast heart rate, difficulty breathing).

Where will I have the Iron Infusion?

You will be referred to the Perioperative Medicine Clinic at Torbay Hospital to receive your iron infusion. PLEASE NOTE: Go to the blue zone, in the old part of the hospital, do NOT go to Level 7 (Allerton Ward) in the new block.

What does it involve?

A small plastic cannula will be inserted into the back of your hand and you will receive the iron infusion through a drip connected to the cannula. The infusion usually takes 30 minutes to an hour and the nurse looking after you will monitor your heart rate, blood pressure and temperature during the treatment. You will be asked to wait for 30 minutes after the infusion to make sure you feel well enough to go home.

Will I need more blood tests?

You will need to have a repeat blood test to review your iron levels 4 weeks after having your iron infusion, unless you are due to come in for surgery before this time. This will be done at your GP surgery.

What do I do if I have been taking iron tablets?

Please stop taking your iron tablets the day before your iron infusion. The doctor or nurse will advise you after your infusion about whether you need to restart your iron tablets. Please update your GP about any medicine changes.

Who can I contact with any further questions or concerns?

Perioperative Medicine Office on 01803 655605

For further assistance or to receive this information in a different format, please contact the department which created this leaflet.