



# Iron Infusion

**Ferinject is a special type of iron preparation given through a drip (into a vein, also described as an infusion). Ferinject is sometimes used instead of iron tablets.**

Some of the reasons for needing Ferinject are:

- Blood tests show you are anaemic and this has not responded to oral iron tablets or the iron tablets have made you feel unwell
- You have significant anaemia but are otherwise feeling well
- You decided not to have a blood transfusion, for example if you are a Jehovah's Witness.

Your doctor will suggest Ferinject and then discuss this with you.

### **Using Ferinject instead of blood**

Ferinject is not a blood product. Although blood transfusion is safe, there are some risks, including a tiny risk of infection. Ferinject does not have the risks of blood transfusion.

### **Safety and possible side effects**

- Potential mild side effects occur in 1 to 10% of patients, including headache, dizziness, rash, nausea and vomiting, abdominal pain, muscle cramps, diarrhoea, constipation, abnormal liver function, flushing, low or high blood pressure and injection site reactions.
- Very rarely (<1% of infusions) the Ferinject can cause allergic reactions. You will therefore be monitored closely before, during and after the infusion.
- A rare but significant complication of Ferinject is **permanent skin staining or discoloration**, which can occur if some of the drug leaks outside the vein during the infusion. To reduce the risk, a flush of water or saline (salt solution) is given into your vein before the Ferinject. Please let the nurse know if you experience any pain or burning in the arm during the infusion.

### **Safety of Ferinject in pregnancy**

Ferinject is considered safe to use after the first trimester (three months) of pregnancy and after delivery.

### **Receiving Ferinject**

When you arrive the nurse will take your pulse, blood pressure and temperature. Next the nurse or one of the doctors will put a drip in your arm and start the Ferinject infusion. This usually takes about 15 minutes and afterwards the nurse will check your pulse, blood pressure and temperature again. Usually you can go home straight after the Ferinject has finished, unless you feel unwell.

**Oral iron tablets**

You must not take oral iron tablets while you are having Ferinject and unless instructed by your doctor you should not restart taking the oral iron tablets until after the repeat haemoglobin result is available.

**Suitability of Ferinject**

You should not have Ferinject if you:

- Have anaemia caused by deficiencies other than iron deficiency (for example B12 deficiency)
- Have ever been told by a doctor that you have “iron overload”
- Have ever had an allergic reaction to iron given to you through a drip
- Have ever had a problem with your liver, such as liver cirrhosis or hepatitis

**Further information**

If you have any questions after reading this leaflet please let your nurse or doctor know. They will be happy to discuss them with you.

**I have read the information above and understand that there may be a small risk of skin staining or allergic reaction to an infusion of iron.**

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

