

Patient information factsheet

Ferinject

Ferinject is special type of iron preparation given through a drip (into a vein, also described 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 after the birth of your baby 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 of Ferinject

Ferinject is considered safe to use after the first trimester (three months) of pregnancy and after delivery. Rarely (in under 1% of cases) it 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 midwife know if you experience any pain or burning in the arm during the infusion.

Very little Ferinject crosses into breast milk so you can safely breastfeed.

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.

Receiving Ferinject

Ferinject can be given on the day obstetric unit, labour ward, obstetric wards or antenatal clinic.

When you arrive the midwife will take your pulse, blood pressure and temperature. Next the midwife or one of the doctors will put a drip in your arm and start the Ferinject infusion. This usually takes about 15 minutes via the drip.

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Afterwards the midwife will check your pulse, blood pressure and temperature again. Usually you can go home straight after the Ferinject has finished, unless you feel unwell.

Your blood haemoglobin level will be checked ten to 14 days later. If you are still pregnant, it is possible that you may need one more Ferinject dose. If you have already given birth, you may need to take oral iron tablets.

Oral iron tablets

You must not take oral iron tablets while you are having Ferinject and you should not restart taking the 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 midwife or doctor know. They will be happy to discuss them with you.

If you need a translation of this document, an interpreter or a version in large print, Braille or on audio tape, please telephone 023 8120 4688 for help.