

# Intravenous (IV) Iron Infusion

Information sheet for women and their family

## Why is iron important?

Iron is essential for the body to make haemoglobin (Hb). Hb is very important as it carries oxygen from the lungs to all body cells. If your Hb or iron levels are low this may make you feel tired and decrease your concentration.

### Risks & Benefits of IV Iron

Your doctor would have explained the risks, benefits & any available alternatives to IV iron.

IV iron is prescribed for iron deficiency anaemia when oral iron is not tolerated, effective or likely to work quickly enough and the benefits of IV iron outweigh the risks in your particular case.

### How much iron is needed?

Your doctor will calculate how much iron is needed to return Hb levels to normal & increase your iron stores for the future. If you have been given a script you will need to have it filled at your local chemist and bring all the medication to your appointment. If you need a large dose you will be given 2 appointments, these will be booked 1 week apart.

The iron will take a few weeks to have its full effect and your doctor/midwife will check your Hb level to see you are responding.

Iron tablets should be stopped for a week after an iron infusion because the iron in them will not be absorbed by the body. Check with your doctor/midwife if and when iron tablets are needed.

### Side Effects of IV Iron

Patients receiving iron infusions may experience side effects including:

- Changes in what you taste (e.g a metal taste in your mouth)
- Headaches, feeling sick or vomiting
- Muscle and joint pain
- Shortness of breath
- Feeling itchy or have a rash
- Changes in blood pressure, pulse and temperature
- Redness, pain and swelling at injection site
- Allergic reaction
- Severe side effects are rare. You will be closely monitored for any signs of these side effects by nursing staff.

### Day of the IV iron infusion

- Have your breakfast/lunch. You do not need to fast for an IV iron infusion, it is important you are well hydrated
- The iron will be given through a small IV drip which will be put in your arm
- If you experience any side effects, inform the nurse immediately
- You can drive home after the infusion and resume usual activities

## After the IV iron infusion

Sometimes side effects start 1 to 2 days after the infusion and include headache, mild fever, and joint aches. These generally settle down by themselves over the next few days. If you have any worries, contact your midwife, doctor or the Medical Day Unit (MDU) for advice.

If you have chest pain, difficulty in breathing, dizziness or neck/mouth swelling **SEEK URGENT MEDICAL ATTENTION/ CALL AN AMBULANCE (000)**

### GOSFORD MDU

Operating Hours 8.00am-8.00pm - Mon- Fri

Phone: **4320 9660** - if you are unable to attend your appointment:

### DIRECTIONS

MDU is located adjacent to the entry to Children's ward on level 4, detailed instructions on locating the MDU will be given when your appointment is confirmed

### Information about MDU

- You will be there for less than 1 hour
- Light Refreshments are provided free
- Please do not bring children or other persons as there is limited space and this is a restful environment.

Reference: Intravenous Iron infusion. Blood Safe, Government of South Australia. June 2011.

## Contact details:

### Location

Medical Day Unit, Gosford Hospital

 **4320 9660**

