

Gastroenterology Unit

This leaflet answers some common questions patients ask about intravenous iron (Ferric carboxymaltose, Ferinject®). Further information can be found in the information leaflet supplied by the manufacturer or from your pharmacist, IBD nurse specialist or doctor.

Ferinject – Intravenous Iron

What is Ferinject®?

Ferinject® is a sterile solution of iron given through a vein. It helps to replenish a shortage of iron in patients with iron deficiency. Iron is essential for the oxygen carrying capacity of haemoglobin in red blood cells and of myoglobin in muscle tissue.

Why am I having Ferinject®?

Ferinject® may be used in the following situations:

- in patients known to be intolerant to iron preparations taken by mouth.
- in patients where there is a specific clinical need to deliver iron rapidly to the iron stores in the body.
- in patients with active inflammatory bowel disease where iron preparations taken by mouth may be inappropriate. Many patients with IBD, however, can tolerate oral iron.

What dose will I have?

You will need to be weighed and have a blood test before being given Ferinject®. This is because the dose of iron needed is calculated based on your weight and haemoglobin. In order to get the correct dose you may need to come in for two infusions, separated by at least a week.

How is Ferinject® given?

You will receive the iron as a drip infusion through a vein in your arm and it is usually given over a period of just 15 minutes. The infusion will appear as a brown solution in the bag. There is no need for any special monitoring during the infusion and you can leave as soon it is completed.

What are the common side effects?

Like all medicines, Ferinject® may cause side effects, although most people tolerate it well. The most common side effects people may experience are headache, dizziness, nausea, stomach pain, rash and constipation or diarrhoea.

Very occasionally Ferinject® may leak from the injection site. This could cause some pain and swelling or damage to the surrounding soft tissues, including brown discoloration of the skin. If this happens, the infusion will be stopped.

Treatment with Ferinject® is not known to be associated with allergic-type reactions (which is the major advantage, apart from the short duration of infusion), but there are some other side effects that occur rarely. Please let the nurse or your doctor know if you feel unwell during or after the infusion, or if you want more information.

Are there any reasons why I should not receive Ferinject®?

You should not receive Ferinject® if:

- you are known to be allergic to Ferinject® or any other ingredients in the infusion
- your anaemia is not due to a shortage of iron
- you have too much iron in your body, or your body cannot use iron very well.

Are there any special precautions before receiving Ferinject®?

You doctor will need to discuss with you whether you can have Ferinject® if:

- you have a liver problem
- you have an infection
- you have asthma, eczema or other allergies.

Can Ferinject® be given during pregnancy and when breastfeeding?

You should avoid having Ferinject® during the first 3 months of pregnancy. If you need an iron infusion after 3 months of pregnancy, your doctor will discuss with you whether Ferinject® is suitable. It is OK to breastfeed.

Does Ferinject® interfere with my other medicines?

Ferinject® should not be given at the same time as other iron preparations taken by mouth as it may stop them from being absorbed. There do not seem to be any interactions with other medicines.

If you need an interpreter or need a document in another language, large print, Braille or audio version, please call **01865 221473** or email **PALSJR@orh.nhs.uk**