

Intravenous (IV) Iron Infusion

Introduction

Iron is essential for the making of red blood cells. Red blood cells carry oxygen around the body. Red blood cells only live for about 4 months and are constantly being replaced by your body. It is therefore important that you have enough iron to make replacement red blood cells. Not having enough iron can make you anaemic. If you have kidney problems you may also need extra iron to make healthy red blood cells.

Causes of iron deficiency include:

- You may not get enough iron in your diet.
- You may not absorb enough iron.
- You may lose blood through lots of blood tests, or through dialysis.

Blood tests tell us if you have enough iron. The two tests we use are:

- Serum Ferritin – amount of iron stored
- Transferrin saturation – how much iron is available to make red blood cells.

If your iron levels are low, you have iron deficient anaemia. To correct this, iron supplements are required.

Iron replacement

Oral Iron

Iron supplements are available in tablets. You may require higher doses of iron than you can absorb from iron tablets as absorption may take longer and may not be sufficient. They are also often not very well tolerated.

Intravenous iron

Intravenous (IV) iron is very effective at correcting iron deficient anaemia. Treatment can be given as a once only total dose or as a number of smaller doses. IV iron rapidly replenishes your iron stores.

Ferrosig® (Iron Polymaltose)

Ferrosig® is the form of intravenous injectable iron that you will receive. Ferrosig® is both effective and well tolerated.

Procedure

The iron is given through a small tube (cannula) in your vein. The infusion itself takes about 3 ½ hours and is administered by a pump. (You should allow about 5 hours in total to allow for paperwork, preparation for infusion etc.). Over this time nurses will monitor your blood pressure, pulse and temperature. You will be provided with drinks and food during the procedure. Once the infusion is finished the tube will be removed.

Side effects

There are always potential side effects of any drugs. Whilst reactions to this drug are rare, they do occasionally happen. This is why you are receiving your infusion within the hospital. Possible side effects include flushing, sweating, a drop in blood pressure and dizziness. During the infusion you will be closely monitored by the nursing staff. Should you experience any unpleasant effects, please inform the nursing staff.

Admission for infusion

The iron infusion takes place at Timaru Hospital. You will be required to remain in the department throughout the infusion. Once you are booked to receive your iron infusion you will receive written confirmation of the details.

Based on "Intravenous (IV) Iron Infusion" (ref 1782) provided by the Canterbury DHB. Adapted by the South Canterbury DHB. July 2015.