Care after your iron infusion

Your doctor has prescribed an iron infusion for you. The iron is given through an intravenous (IV) tube into a vein in your arm. Based on your blood levels and how you are feeling your doctor will decide how often you need the iron infusion.

The iron infusion takes about 2 to 4 hours. You may need some medication before the infusion, which may take up to 1 hour. This medication may be given to help possible side effects from receiving an iron infusion.

The nurses in Medical Day Care will closely watch you during the iron infusion and treat any side effects you may have. The nurses will tell you how to take care of yourself at home. After the infusion you can drive yourself home and return to your usual activities.

Medications like Benadryl can make you sleepy. If you were given a medication such as Benadryl you will need to have someone drive you home.

Most common side effects

Most patients when they go home have no side effects, but there is a risk of side effects after an iron infusion. These include:

- metallic taste
- headache
- muscle aches
- nausea
- changes to blood pressure or pulse
- swelling of your legs
- vomiting
- fever and chills

If you have side effects they may last up to 1 week after the infusion and will usually go away on their own.
What do you do if you have some side effects at home?

Some side effects you can treat at home. You can suck on lemon candies for the metallic taste. Tylenol can be used to treat headache and muscle aches.

If your side effects are not relieved or become severe seek medical help right away. If you have reactions such as chest pain, difficulty breathing, neck and mouth swelling you need emergency help right away. Call 911 or go to the nearest hospital Emergency Department that serves adults.

If you live in Hamilton adults may go to the Emergency Department at the Hamilton General Hospital, Juravinski Hospital or St. Joseph’s Healthcare, Hamilton. The Emergency Department at McMaster University Medical Centre is only for children ages 17 and under.

Do not drive yourself. Take this paper with you.

For questions or concerns

Please ask any questions you may have during your iron infusion. We want to make sure you know how to care for yourself at home.