

## Iron Infusions

The most common cause of anemia is not having enough iron. If you have anemia and cannot take iron orally (by mouth), you can get iron through an IV infusion.

Do not take iron by mouth while you are getting iron infusions. You can restart taking your iron by mouth after your last infusion.

### Preparation

You will have the iron (Venofer) infusion in the Hematology Infusion center at Nationwide Children's Hospital. The medicine is very dark in color and usually comes in a small bag.

- It is very important to eat a good breakfast or lunch before you arrive, and to drink plenty of fluids.
- The infusion requires placing an IV in your arm or hand. Sometimes this stings, so you can ask the nurse to apply a cream to numb the IV insertion site.
- You will have blood tests to measure the iron levels in your blood before the first infusion. This blood can be drawn when your IV is started.
- **Do not take your iron medicine by mouth while you are getting iron infusions.**

The healthcare team will check your temperature, pulse and blood pressure and your medical history. Then the medicine will be mixed for the infusion. There will be a short waiting period for the medicine to come to the infusion center.

### Procedure

- During the infusion, you will be sitting in a big 'Lazy-Boy' type chair.
- You may bring a book to read or game to play to pass the time while you are at the infusion center. There are also televisions throughout the Infusion Center.
- After the medicine arrives on the unit, your infusion will start. It will take about 30 minutes.

## Side Effects

The most common side effects are dizziness or feeling faint. Tell your nurse if you feel dizzy or light-headed. Giving the medicine more slowly may help this. The nurse will take your blood pressure often before, during and after the infusion. We will ask you to stay for a few minutes after the infusion. If you feel fine, you will be able to go home.

The IV iron has given you a jump-start to better iron levels in your body. To maintain this level eat iron-fortified foods. We do not expect hemoglobin levels to change much with intravenous iron therapy, especially if hemoglobin is mildly low or normal at the start of infusions. We do expect to see improvement in iron levels by the time of the fourth infusion.

## Follow-up

- If you will have more than one iron infusion you need to schedule your next appointment(s) before you leave. When you know the dates and times of your next infusions, write down your appointments. If any changes are needed, please discuss them with your nurse before you go home.
- Six weeks after your last iron infusion you will have a follow-up appointment.
- Twelve weeks after your last iron infusion, you will have additional blood tests. These labs can be drawn at a local Nationwide Children's Close to Home location that is easy for you to get to.
- For all questions about the infusions or follow-up appointments, please call the Hematology Nurse Clinician at 614-722-8886.