Government of **Western Australia**
North Metropolitan Health Service
Women and Newborn Health Service

Iron supplements

Consumer medicine information

To give you energy for daily life, you need iron. Iron is important for your health during pregnancy and for your baby's development. Anaemia can develop if iron levels fall. This brochure contains some information on the iron supplements you have been prescribed to treat low iron levels, with or without anaemia. Some iron tablets and tonics contain very small amounts of iron and are generally not suitable when an iron supplement is needed.

Iron supplements

Your recent blood test shows that your iron storage (ferritin) level is low.

Women and Newborn Health Service recommends you take an iron supplement that contains at least 100mg of elemental iron each day.

Recommended iron supplements to treat low iron storage levels are listed below.

These products are available from your local pharmacy without a prescription. Please consult your doctor regarding the duration of your iron therapy.

Trade name	Formulation	Elemental iron content	Additional information
☐ Ferro-F-tab®	Ferrous fumarate 310mg + folic acid 350microg Film coated tablets	100mg	Take on an empty stomach with a glass of water or fruit juice one hour before or two hours after a meal.
☐ Ferrograd C®	Ferrous sulfate 325mg + Vitamin C 500mg Controlled release tablets	105mg	
☐ Ferro-Gradumet®	Ferrous sulfate 325mg Controlled release tablets	105mg	
☐ Ferro-liquid®	Ferrous sulfate 30mg/mL Oral liquid	6mg/mL	
☐ Maltofer®	Iron polymaltose 370mg Film coated tablets	100mg	Take during or immediately after a meal. Take tablet with a glass of water. Oral liquid can be mixed with fruit and vegetable juice.
☐ Maltofer Oral liquid®	Iron polymaltose 37mg/mL	10mg/mL	
☐ Other			

How to take iron supplements for best absorption and fewer side effects

- Swallow capsules or tablets whole, do not crush or chew them.
- Do **not** take with tea, coffee, chocolate / cocoa drinks or red wine.
- Do **not** take within two to three hours of antacids, calcium tablets, (levo) thyroxine, doxycycline or minocycline.

Side effects

- Include nausea, upset stomach, stomach cramps, constipation and diarrhoea
- Liquid iron may cause teeth discoloration
- Often improve or disappear as your body adjusts to the iron supplement
- Can make your stool (faeces) turn black, but this is normal

How to ease side effects

- If taking more than one iron supplement daily, spread capsules or tablets throughout the day.
- Increase daily fluid and dietary fibre to ease constipation.
- If constipation continues, stool softeners or changing to a different type of iron might help.
- Take your capsules or tablets with or shortly after food if you experience stomach upset.
- If iron tablets cannot be tolerated, iron syrup may be suitable and can be diluted with water or fruit juice and sipped through a straw to avoid teeth discoloration.

Iron in pregnancy and breastfeeding

Oral iron supplements are safe to use during pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Where can I get more information?

Contact your doctor, pharmacist or the Obstetric Medicines Information Service at King Edward Memorial Hospital on (08) 6458 2723 if you have any questions about medicines in pregnancy and breastfeeding.

Useful links

- mothertobaby.org/fact-sheets-parent/
- Lactmed - ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK501922/

WARNING KEEP OUT OF REACH OF CHILDREN

Iron tablets should be kept out of reach of children. A small amount of iron can be poisonous, even fatal in infants and young children. If a child accidentally takes iron tablets call the Poisons Information Centre immediately on 13 11 26.

CONSUMER REVIEWED

The information provided is for information purposes only. If you are a patient using this publication, you should seek assistance from a healthcare professional when interpreting these materials and applying them to your individual circumstances.

Women and Newborn Health Service
Obstetrics Medicine Information Service
(08) 6458 2723
kemh.health.wa.gov.au

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