

PATIENT INFORMATION LEAFLET

IRON SUPPLEMENTS

ABOUT your medicine

Iron is a mineral that the body needs to produce red blood cells. When the body does not get enough iron, a condition called iron-deficiency anaemia will develop. This condition is associated with excessive tiredness and weakness as there are insufficient red blood cells to transport oxygen throughout the body. Oxygen is needed to produce energy. Iron-containing supplements are thus useful for the prevention or treatment of iron-deficiency anaemias.

HOW should I take the medicine?

Your doctor will determine the amount of medicine you should take based on the severity of your condition. Take this medicine in the dose prescribed by your doctor.

Iron supplements may be given either orally or by injection into the muscle or vein. The supplements may be taken once or more often during the day depending on how low your iron store is. Your doctor may be using blood tests to monitor your iron load and response to treatment. Keep all appointments for blood tests and regular visits.

Iron is best taken on an empty stomach, 1 hour before or 2 hours after food. If gastric upset is experienced, it may be taken with food to minimise the upset. However, iron should not be taken together with milk or antacids as they reduce the absorption of iron. Iron supplements may colour your stools black, but you need not stop taking them.

What should I do if **I FORGET** a dose?

If you miss a dose or forget to take your medicine, take it as soon as you can. However, if it is almost time for your next dose, wait until then to take the medicine and skip the missed dose. Do not double your dose or take extra medicine to make up for a missed dose. If you have missed several doses, please call your physician to check what you should do.

E108R0

Keep all medication out of reach of children

Discard all medication that has expired or is no longer required

What are the possible **SIDE-EFFECTS** of the medicine?

Most side-effects of taking iron are mild and may not need discontinuation of the supplement unless severe. The following are the possible side-effects:

- dark tarry hard stools
- gastrointestinal upset
- metallic taste, nausea, vomiting
- headaches
- muscle pain
- constipation or diarrhoea

Taking too much iron may be associated with the following. Consult your doctor immediately if any of the following occurs:

- severe gastrointestinal irritation / pain
- confusion and excessive tiredness
- palpitations
- vomiting or coughing of blood

What **PRECAUTIONS** should I take?

Inform your doctor if you have any of the following conditions before proceeding with iron supplements:

- Haemochromatosis (high iron in the body)
- Thalassaemia
- Allergy to other iron products

Iron administration by injection may be associated with some reactions. Please inform your doctor should you experience any of the following during or shortly after (24 to 48 hours) an injection or infusion of iron:

- Breathlessness
- Light-headedness
- Flushing
- Sweating

Keep all medication out of reach of children

- Muscle ache

Do inform your doctor and pharmacist if you are already taking some other medicines, herbal preparations, nutritional products or vitamin supplements.

You must tell your doctor if you are allergic to any other medicines or if you develop an allergy while taking this medicine. The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following: swollen face/eyes/lips, difficulty in breathing or widespread itchy skin rashes.

Inform your doctor if you are breast-feeding, pregnant or likely to become pregnant during the course of this treatment

How should **I STORE** the medicine?

Store the medicine in a dry place at room temperature, away from heat and direct light. Do not refrigerate your medicines unless instructed to do so.

National University Hospital

5 Lower Kent Ridge Road, Singapore 119074
Tel: (65) 6779 5555 Fax: (65) 6779 5678
Website: www.nuh.com.sg

Company Registration Number. 198500843R

The information provided in this publication is meant purely for educational purposes and may not be used as a substitute for medical diagnosis or treatment. You should seek the advice of your doctor or a qualified healthcare provider before starting any treatment or if you have any questions related to your health, physical fitness or medical conditions.

Information is correct at time of printing and subject to revision without prior notice.

Discard all medication that has expired or is no longer required