

# Iron

Medication Information Leaflet

## What is the medication used for?

Iron is a type of mineral naturally found in some foods that helps the body to produce red blood cells. It is used to treat or prevent iron deficiency anemia, a condition that occurs when the body has insufficient healthy red blood cells to provide oxygen to the body. Iron deficiency anemia may be due to a poor diet, excessive bleeding (e.g. heavy menses), or as a result of other medical problems (e.g. chronic kidney problems).

During pregnancy, iron supplementation helps meet the increased iron needs of both the mother and the developing baby.

Iron supplements may be available on its own (e.g. Iron Polymaltose), or as a combination product (e.g. Iron Gluconate Co).

## How should I take the medication?

- Take this medication as prescribed by your healthcare professional
- Do not stop taking your medications without checking with your healthcare professional
- This medicine should be taken before food, on an empty stomach, for better absorption. However, for iron polymaltose drops/tablets, it should be taken with or after food for better absorption.

## What should I do if I forget to take/use this medication?

If you miss a dose, take the missed dose as soon as you remember. If it is almost time for your next dose, take only the usual dose. Do not double your dose or use extra medication to make up for the missed dose.

## What precautions should I follow when taking the medication?

Before starting on this medication, inform your healthcare professional if you:

- Are allergic to this medication, or any of the other ingredients in this medication
- Have a medical condition called thalassaemia, a type of blood disorder
- Have a medical condition called haemochromatosis where there is a high iron level in the body
- Are taking any other medications, including supplements, traditional medications and herbal remedies

## What are some side-effects that I need to seek medical advice immediately?

The symptoms of a drug allergy include one or more of the following:

- Swollen face/eyes/lips/tongue
- Difficulty in breathing
- Itchy skin rashes over your whole body

If you experience any of these symptoms, you should stop your medication and see your healthcare professional immediately.

## What are some other side-effects of this medication?

- Stomach upset or vomiting
  - If these side effects occur when the medication is taken on an empty stomach, take it with meals or a snack instead
- Constipation
  - Drink more water and eat more high- fibre foods such as vegetables, fruits and whole grains
- Darkening of stools
  - This side effect is harmless

## What food or medication should I avoid when taking this medication?

Space iron supplements 2 hours apart from milk and other calcium rich foods or supplements.

Do not take iron supplements and certain medications such as antacids, antibiotics (e.g. Quinolones - Ciprofloxacin, Tetracyclines), medications used to treat Parkinson's disease (e.g. Levodopa), or Levothyroxine at the same time. It should be spaced at least 2 to 4 hours apart. You may check with your healthcare professional for more information.

## How should I store the medication?

Store in a cool and dry place, away from direct sunlight. Keep this medication away from children. Throw away all expired medications.

## How should I throw away this medication safely?

Pack this medication into a black trash bag and seal it tightly before throwing into the rubbish chute or bin.

## Disclaimers

If you take more than the recommended dose, please seek medical advice immediately. The information provided on this page does not replace information from your healthcare professional. Please consult your healthcare professional for more information.

*This article is jointly developed by members of the National Medication Information workgroup. The workgroup consists of cluster partners (National Healthcare Group, National University Health System and SingHealth), community pharmacies (Guardian, Unity and Watsons) and Pharmaceutical Society of Singapore.*

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