Patient Information

**Oral Iron in Pregnancy**

Iron is essential for our bodies to function. Your body needs a lot more iron when you are pregnant – for your health and for your baby to develop

If you don’t receive enough iron from the food you eat, the levels of iron in your blood or stored in your body may become low. This may cause you to feel tired, irritable, dizzy or short of breath etc.

Your Maternity Carer has recommended you take an oral iron supplement to increase your iron levels.

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| **Name:** | | | |  | **Based on your test results it is recommended you begin taking medicine containing:** |
| **Today’s date:** | | | |  | **≥60 mg** of elemental iron  **100 – 200 mg** of elemental iron |
| **Your Test Results:** | | | |  | Until your blood test results return to normal or for the remainder of your pregnancy and for a minimum of six weeks after the birth of your baby. |
| Date of blood test: |  |  |  |  |
| Haemoglobin (g/L): |  |  |  |  | **Follow up:**  Repeat blood test at       weeks.  GP for a blood test six weeks after birth of your baby. |
| Ferritin (μg/L): |  |  |  |  |

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| **Recommended Iron Preparation** | | | **Elemental Iron** | | **Dose Information** |
|  |  | **Ferro-f-tab \***  Ferrous Fumerate 310mg,  Folic Acid 350mcg | **100mg** | **Take one tablet on an empty stomach:**  once a day  twice a day  on alternate days | | |
|  |  | **Ferro-tab \***  Ferrous Fumerate 200mg | **65mg** | **Take one tablet on an empty stomach:**  once a day  twice a day  on alternate days | | |
|  |  | **Ferodan**  Ferrous Sulphate 60mg/10 mL Liquid | **60mg/10mL** | **Take** **mL once a day with food, through a straw to avoid staining teeth.** | | |
|  |  | **Ferrograd \*\***  Ferrous Sulphate 325mg | **105mg** | **Take one tablet on an empty stomach:**  once a day  twice a day  on alternate days | | |
|  |  | **Ferrograd C \*\* #**  Ferrous Sulphate 325mg,  Ascorbic Acid 500mg | **105mg** | **Take one tablet on an empty stomach:**  once a day  twice a day  on alternate days | | |

**\*** First line recommendation

**\*\*** Controlled release formulation not recommended due to poor absorption

**#** All preparations are fully subsidised except Ferrograd C.

**Side Effects:**

* Iron may make your bowel motions look dark and become firm (constipation) or loose (diarrhoea) and it could cause heartburn (indigestion) or make you feel a little sick (nausea).
* If you have nausea or diarrhea change the time you take the iron and have it with food
* Drink plenty of water, take foods high in fibre and exercise (walking etc.) to reduce constipation
* For any other mild side effects, keep taking the iron and talk to your midwife or doctor

**Taking Iron:**

* Take 1 hour before you eat a meal or 2 hours after a meal
* Take with water or juice (**NOT milk, fizzy drink, tea or coffee** which prevent iron being absorbed)
* Keep taking the iron until your blood test results are back to normal

**Comparison of recommended iron preparations with over-the-counter multivitamins**



The information below shows the number of tablets or volume of liquid that would be required from over the counter preparations for an effective daily iron dose, based on the recommended daily dose of elemental iron;

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Healtheries Pregnancy & Breastfeeding Multi | Elevit Pregnancy | Floradix Iron and Herbs |
| 1 tablet  = 10mg of elemental iron | 1 tablet  = 60 mg of elemental iron | 10 mL dose  = 10 mg of elemental iron |
|  |  |  |
| 10 tablets | 2 tablets | 10 x 10 mL doses |

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| **Ferro-f-tab** |
| 1 tablet  = **100mg** elemental iron |
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| 1 tablet |

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| --- | --- | --- |
| Blackmores Pregnancy & Breastfeeding Gold | Thompsons Organic  Iron | Carbonyl Iron |
| 1 tablet  = 5 mg of elemental iron | 1 tablet  = 24 mg of elemental iron | 1 tablet  = 1 8 mg of elemental iron |
|  |  |  |
| 13 tablets | 3 tablets | 4 tablets |

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| **Ferro-tab** |
| 1 tablet  = **65.7mg** elemental iron |
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|  |
| 1 tablet |

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**Important:**

The information on this page is to show that there is not enough iron in the over-the-counter preparations to treat low iron levels, compared to the recommended preparations.

Do not take multiple doses of multivitamin tablets. Please follow the instructions on the front page of this leaflet.

(Adapted with permission from Health NZ Waitaha Canterbury).

