

Possible side effects of iron tablets

- Gastro-intestinal irritation
- Constipation
- Diarrhoea
- Nausea
- Dark tarry hard stools
- Metallic taste in mouth
- Headaches

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NHS Fife SMS text service number **07805800005** is available for people who have a hearing or speech impairment.


To find out more about accessible formats contact:

fife.EqualityandHumanRights@nhs.scot
or phone **01592 729130**.

Thank you for taking the time to read this information leaflet.

Please contact your community midwife if you have any further questions or concerns with your medication

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Information for patients

Iron for Anaemia in Pregnancy



Anaemia in pregnancy

Up to 42% of women are anaemic in pregnancy.

Iron deficiency anaemia is the most common cause of anaemia in pregnancy. Iron is required for your baby's growth and development, and anaemia is associated with an increased infection, length of stay in hospital, blood loss and a negative impact on quality of life and mental health. Starting oral iron early in pregnancy reduces the chance of becoming anaemic.

Symptoms of being anaemic include tiredness, weakness, dizziness, pallor, shortness of breath and palpitations.

You are being asked to be part of a national project and Fife is one of the pilot sites. PRAMS (Pregnancy Anaemia Management Scotland) aims to improve anaemia management in pregnancy throughout Scotland.

What will change?

This includes:

1. Checking ferritin levels at around 8-13 weeks of pregnancy along with your routine first bloods. This does not require an extra needle, just an extra sample tube. Checking ferritin levels shows the level of your body's iron stores.
2. Starting oral iron at 16 weeks gestation, take one tablet three times per week, such as Monday, Wednesday and Friday (one tablet of Ferrous Fumarate 210mgs).
3. If you are vegan or vegetarian please let your midwife know as Ferrous Fumarate contains gelatine and you will be given an alternative iron supplement.
4. Taking iron on alternate days improves absorption into the body and reduces side effects.

Your haemoglobin levels (Hb) will be checked routinely at 28 and 33-35 weeks gestation. If your Hb level drops to below 105g/L you will be asked to increase your iron to one tablet each day.

We will be collecting data on the impact of your treatment on improving anaemia so that we can improve anaemia management in the whole of Fife. This will be stored securely and anonymised.

Best foods to eat which contain iron that are easily absorbed

- Red meat (avoid liver and liver products as they have large amounts of Vitamin A which can be harmful to your baby)
- Poultry
- Fish, try not to have more than two portions of oily fish a week such as sardines, mackerel, pilchards and salmon. Tuna may have a lot of mercury in it so no more than two medium tins per week

Other plant-based foods rich in iron

- Fortified cereals
- Dried fruit
- Green vegetables (such as peas, broccoli or dark leafy cabbage, spinach or kale)
- Beans and pulses (such as lentils, soya beans, kidney beans or chickpeas)
- Nuts and seeds
- Dark chocolate
- Tofu
- Brown rice
- Eggs
- Bread, chapatti, pitta bread made with wholemeal flour