

## Check with your doctor before giving any other medicines to your child

This includes herbal medicines.

Unless your doctor has told you not to, you can give iron with paracetamol (Pamol<sup>®</sup>, Paracare<sup>®</sup>) or ibuprofen (Fenpaed<sup>®</sup>, Nurofen<sup>®</sup>).

## General advice about iron

- Try to give the iron at the same time each day, so it is part of your baby's or child's routine.
- Only give the iron to YOUR baby or child and not anyone else.
- If you think someone else has taken the iron by mistake, contact your doctor or Poison Centre straight away.
- Make sure you always have enough; order a new prescription one week before you run out.
- Make sure the iron has not reached its 'use by' date.

## Where should I keep the iron?

- In a cupboard, away from heat and direct sunlight. It does not need to be kept in the fridge.
- Make sure that children cannot see or reach it.
- Keep iron in the same bottle the pharmacy gave to you.

## Where to go for more information

The doctor, pharmacist or nurse can give you more information about iron and other medicines for anaemia.

If your baby or child is very unwell or drowsy, call 111 **immediately** for an ambulance.

If your baby or child has been given too much iron, **immediately call**:

### POISON CENTRE

**0800 POISON (0800 764 766)**

OR

### HEALTHLINE

**0800 611 116 (24 hours a day)**



# Ferrous Sulfate (Iron or Ferodan<sup>®</sup>)

For Prevention or  
Treatment of Iron  
Deficiency Anaemia in  
babies and children

*What you need to know*

## What is Ferrous Sulfate?

Ferrous sulfate (ferrous sulphate) or iron is given to children for the treatment or prevention of anaemia.

Ferodan® liquid (150mg/5ml) is iron for babies and children.

Tablet forms of iron are also available.

## Why is it important for babies and children to take iron?

Iron is needed to make haemoglobin which is needed to carry oxygen from the lungs to the body. Having too little haemoglobin is called anaemia.

Babies and children with anaemia are often pale and tired. They may not grow and develop properly.

Babies are usually born with good stores of iron in their bodies, but these can be used up if not replaced by iron from their diet. Breast milk contains very little iron.

Premature babies (who are born early) may not get enough iron because they miss out on the iron transferred from Mum in the last few weeks of pregnancy.

Ferrous sulfate (Ferodan®) will help your baby or child to make more haemoglobin, and increase iron stores.

## How should I give iron?

- Iron may be prescribed once or twice a day. Always check the label.
- If given twice a day, this is usually in the morning and evening (about 10-12 hours apart)
- Your doctor will work out the amount; the dose will be shown on the pharmacy label.

### **It is important to give the right amount. The dose may increase as your baby or child grows.**

- Iron works best when given on an empty stomach (30 minutes before or 1 hour after a feed or food). However if this upsets your baby or child's stomach, give it with a little food.
- Measure the dose with an oral syringe and give on its own or mixed with a little water (Do not mix with milk).

## When should the iron start working?

It takes 3-4 weeks for the iron stores to build up in the body. Usually iron needs to be taken for at least 3 months for it to have full benefit.

### **Keep giving ferrous sulfate each day until your child's first birthday or your doctor asks you to stop**

## What if my baby or child vomits?

- If your baby or child vomits less than 30 minutes after giving the iron, give the same dose again.
- If it is more than 30 minutes, do not give another dose until the next time it is due.

## What if I forgot to give it?

If giving iron once a day: If remembered within 12 hours, give the missed dose. Otherwise wait until the next dose.

If giving twice daily: If remembered within 4 hours, give the missed dose. Otherwise wait until the next dose. Never give a double dose.

## What if I give too much iron?

It can be dangerous to give too much. Never give more than the doctor has prescribed. Your baby or child may have had too much if they have:

- Stomach pains
- Repeated vomiting or diarrhea
- Blood stained or green vomit or stools (poo)

Some babies and children may have no symptoms if they have had too much iron. If you are worried contact one of the numbers on the back of the pamphlet.

If your baby or child looks very unwell or drowsy, call an ambulance immediately.

## Are there any side effects?

We use medicines to make babies and children better, but sometimes they have unwanted effects. Some of these include stomach pain, nausea, vomiting, wind, diarrhoea or constipation. If these problems last longer than a week, see your doctor. Don't worry if your baby's or child's stool (poo) may be darker than usual. Iron can temporarily discolour your child's teeth, but this can be prevented by brushing after a dose.