

# Iron Handout for Families

Developed by Drs. Lorrain and Hapchyn (Child Psychiatry) 2013, updated 2018

Updated 2015 with Drs. Lemieux and Dosman (Developmental Pediatrics)

Updated 2023 with Drs. Lorrain, Hapchyn and Maslo (Child Psychiatry)

Child's Name	Weight (kg)	Elemental iron dose per day

Your child has been prescribed **elemental iron**. This is NOT the same as “ferrous sulfate” or other types of iron that are listed on bottles. **Please talk to your Pharmacist or Doctor to choose the iron preparation that will work best for your child.** Natural healthcare stores often have different types of iron preparations, but these are NOT approved by Health Canada, so you should check with your doctor or pharmacist before using them.

## Types of iron preparations:

- Fer-In-Sol DROPS (\$\$) *mostly used for infants*: 15 mg elemental iron per 1 mL
- Fer-In-Sol SYRUP (\$\$): 30 mg elemental iron per 5 mL
- Palafer or Eurofer SUSPENSION (\$\$): 100 mg elemental iron per 5 mL, cherry flavour
- Feramax POWDER (\$-\$-\$-\$): 15 mg elemental iron per ¼ teaspoon of powder (grape flavoured polysaccharide-iron complex)
- Feramax CAPSULES (\$\$): 150 mg elemental iron per capsule
- Ferrous gluconate TABLETS (\$): 35 mg elemental iron per tablet
- Ferrous sulfate TABLETS (\$): 60 mg elemental iron per tablet
- Ferrous fumarate TABLETS (\$): 100 mg elemental iron per tablet
- EBMfer (Ferrous ascorbate syrup) (\$\$\$): 5 mg/ml elemental iron, berry flavour
- EBMfer capsule (Ferrous ascorbate) (\$\$): 100 mg elemental iron per capsule
- Pediafer liquid (\$\$): 30 mg elemental iron/ 5ml, lemon flavour
- BioFe chewable (\$-\$-\$-\$): 10 mg per chewable tablet, grape flavour (better absorption)
- BioFe syrup (\$-\$-\$-\$): 15 mg per 5 ml (better absorption)
- Ferosom powder (\$-\$-\$-\$): 21 mg per sachet, 30 mg per capsule (better absorption)
- Compounded iron by prescription only (\$\$): 50 mg per chocolate

## It is important to remember a few things about iron:

- 1) **Please lock up this medication.** An overdose of iron is harmful and would require emergency treatment.
- 2) **Please do not take anything that contains calcium (such as milk, formula, yogurt) 1 hour before or 1 hour after the dose of iron.** Calcium interferes with how the body absorbs iron. Iron is best absorbed either on an empty stomach or if taken with citrus fruit (like a small amount of orange juice).
- 3) **Please have your child brush his/her teeth after taking a liquid iron formulation.** Liquid iron can stain the teeth and gums. Drinking the liquid iron **through a straw** and brushing the teeth after can reduce the chance of staining. If staining occurs, talk to your dentist. Stained teeth and gums are generally not permanent.
- 4) **Iron can cause darker bowel movements, stomach upset, nausea, diarrhea, or constipation.** Please talk to your doctor if this happens or if your child has any other side effects. **Iron can be taken once a day or split into 2 or 3 small doses per day.** Splitting up the dose may decrease stomach upset.
- 5) **Your child's blood tests should be repeated after 2-4 months of treatment.** If bloodwork is difficult for your child, please visit the “Autism Speaks” website ([www.autismspeaks.org](http://www.autismspeaks.org)) to download a FREE parent toolkit on how you can help make blood tests easier for your child to handle. Note: These tips are useful whether or not your child has autism.