

# Iron Handout for Families

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

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

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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. Look on the label for dosing information for elemental iron. **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.

**The preparations with the \* are better absorbed.**

## Types of iron preparations:

- Fer-In-Sol DROPS (\$\$) *mostly used for infants*: 15 mg elemental iron per 1 mL
- BioFe DROPS (\$\$) *mostly used for infants*: 10 mg elemental iron per 20 drops
- Fer-In-Sol SYRUP (\$\$): 30 mg elemental iron per 5 mL
- Palafer or Eurofer SUSPENSION (\$\$): 100 mg elemental iron per 5 mL, cherry flavour
- Pediafer LIQUID (\$\$): 30 mg elemental iron/ 5ml, lemon flavour
- EBMfer SYRUP (\$\$\$): 5 mg/ml elemental iron, berry flavour (ferrous ascorbate) \*
- BioFe SYRUP (\$\$-\$\$\$): 15 mg per 5 ml (micronized and microencapsulated) \*
- Feramax POWDER (\$\$-\$\$\$): 15 mg elemental iron per ¼ teaspoon of grape powder
- Ferosom POWDER (\$\$-\$\$\$): 21 mg per sachet \*
- Feramax CHEWABLE (\$\$): 45 mg elemental iron per tablet with 1000 mcg B12, 75 mg Vit C
- BioFe CHEWABLE (\$\$\$): 5 mg per chewable tablet, grape flavour (iron pyrophosphate) \*
- Fergon CHEWABLE (\$\$): 27 mg per chewable tablet, orange flavour (ferric pyrophosphate)
- Feramax CAPSULES (\$\$): 150 mg elemental iron per capsule (Polydextrose-iron complex) \*
- Ferosom CAPSULES (\$\$): 30 mg elemental iron per capsule \*
- EBMfer CAPSULE (\$\$): 100 mg elemental iron per capsule (ferrous ascorbate) \*
- 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
- 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 eat 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 or mixed with a small amount of orange juice. Vitamin C also increases absorption.
- 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 or taking it with food may decrease stomach upset. Try different iron preparations as some upset the gut less than others.
- 5) **Your child's blood tests should be repeated after about 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. These tips are useful for all young children.